

POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
SIR WALTER SCOTT

NOTE BY THE PUBLISHERS

*This edition omits a few short poems, and also some notes and short introductions to the poems, which are the copyright of Messrs Black of Edinburgh.  
It contains, however, an original critical Biography by Mr F T Palgrave, editor of "The Golden Treasury;" and also some original introductions and notes from the pen of a gentleman familiar with Scott's literature and scenery.*

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## DEDICATION

THE first of our living Statesmen is not only remarkable for the largeness of his political views and his consummate mastery of details, but for the generous confidence with which he regards the working classes of his fellow-countrymen, and for his untiring energy in promoting their welfare. He is also known as a lover of the beautiful and the noble in literature, especially as exhibited in the poetry of the heroic ages. A popular edition of Sir Walter Scott's Poems has therefore a double right to the sanction of his name. The writer of the following Memoir avails himself of the privilege which has been accorded him, and with sentiments of the deepest admiration and respect, dedicates this book to Mr. Gladstone.

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## SIR WALTER SCOTT

WITHIN that small number of our countrymen who have been known and admired throughout the civilized world during this century, three hold a place of unequalled pre-eminence,—Wellington, Scott, and Byron. Each of the three kingdoms claims one of the heroes; but although Ireland and England may also point to something distinguishably rational in the genius of their sons, yet it will not be disputed that Scotland is far more exclusively and fully represented by Marmion and the Heart of Midlothian, than the spirit of England by Childe Harold, or that of Ireland by the Peninsular campaigns. We read in the early ages of the world how whole nations sprang from, and were known by the name of some one great chief, to whom a more than human rank was assigned by the poetry and the gratitude of later generations. Darius and Louis were personified in Ion and Darius. It appears not altogether fanciful to think similarly of Scott in the phrase employed by the historians of Greece, he might be styled the *gemma* or *Jewel* of Scotland. He sums up, or seems to sum up, in the most conspicuous manner, those leading qualities in which his countrymen, at least his countrymen of old, differ from their fellow Britons. No one human being can, however, be completely the representative man of his race, and some points may be observed in Scott which do not altogether reflect the rational image. Yet, on the whole, Mr. Carlyle's estimate will probably be accepted as the truth. "No Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott, the good and the not so good, which all Scotchmen inherit, ran through every fibre of him"

The first and best reason for attempting the sketch of a poet's life is to throw light upon his poetry. In the case of Scott, whose verse forms only the earlier half of his writings, such a sketch would in strictness end with his forty-fifth year. It would be unpleasant, however, to break off thus; and the story of his career, even if he had not been author of "Marmion" and "Old Mortality," is in itself one of the most interesting which we possess. An eminently good and noble hearted man, tried by almost equal extremes of fortune, and victorious over both,—the life of Scott would be a tragic drama in the fullest sense, moving and teaching us at once through pity, and love, and terror, even if he had not also, in many ways, deserved the title of greatness. The aim of these pages will hence be to present a biography, complete in its main points, and including some remarks

on Scott's position as a writer, which the accompanying narrative will, it is hoped, render easily intelligible

Scott's life may be conveniently divided into three periods · that of the child and the youth who had not yet found where his strength lay (1771-1799) · that of his poetry, whether edited and translated by him, or original (1799-1814) · that of his novels, his wealth and his poverty (1814-1832) The time when his powers were fully matured, and his happiest years, would lie about midway across the second and third of these periods, for the full "flower of his life" was fugitive in proportion to its brilliancy A perceptible air of unity marks the lives of most poets The character and circumstances of Scott, on the contrary, present a crowd of singular contrasts; there is a deep underlying harmony, which it is the main object of this sketch to trace, but at first sight he is a strikingly complex creature; the number of antitheses about him, which aid in making him so representative a Scotchman, is the first and one of the main points which the reader should bear in mind. An antithesis of this kind meets us at once in the story, indeed, preceding the poet's birth, it exercised perhaps the most marked influence amongst the circumstances which moulded his career Both in its position and its traditions, his family was eminently typical of much that we associate with his country Though a solicitor of moderate means, at a time when the profession had not won its way to a liberal standing in popular estimation, Scott's father, also Walter, reckoned socially as of "gentle blood," in virtue less of his high character than of his Border descent, which was traced through the Scotts of Harden to the main stem (now holding the ducal honours of Buccleuch), in the fourteenth century. The coarse plundering life of this and other clans, whose restlessness and roving warfare were long the misfortune and misery of the "Marches," has received from Scott all the tints which poetry could throw over an age softened by distance, the romance which it had in his eyes may have been increased by the curious resemblance which the energetic anarchy of the Border families establishes between them and the clans, more correctly so called, of the Highlands; yet, if we turn from ballads to the actual story of the frontier raids, it is that common tale of unholy ravage and murder which rather deserved the curse, than the consecration of poetry Remark also that the forays, so dear in the poet's eyes, do not belong to the warfare for the independence of Scotland, that they had very little political colouring, and were, in fact, picturesque fragments of a barbarous time maintained long after date, through the mutual jealousy of the two neighbour kingdoms They exhibit the law of hand against the law of head, or, again, from a more poetical point of view, they may be regarded as bold protests in favour of individuality, against the monotonizing character of civilized and peaceful existence Like much that we shall have to note in Scott's own career, the border clans were, in a certain sense, practical anachronisms, whose very likeness to the wild Highlanders of the north placed them in striking con-

trust to the love of law and peaceful death which lies deep in the Scottish nature, and, until a few years before Scott's birth, led the Lowlanders to regard their Celtic fellow-countrymen with a contempt and hatred, in effacing which it was the noble mission of his own generation to be the main instrument.

These fatal details are here dwelt on, because they bear up on that quality which is peculiar to Scott's genius, and make out at once its strength and its weakness. It would be difficult to name another instance of a mind so habitually balanced between the real and the unreal. There have been those who look, for example, at strong, vigorous poet types, but they have either comprehended them without regretting, as Hallam and Macaulay, or have distinctly preferred them and adopted their way of thought. Poets, again, have made and aspired to power as Scott over the world and the present, as Burns and Crabbe. But they had no sympathy with the past, or have chosen other subjects in the past, as Dryden and his Iliads, and Byron in his Plays;—but there was no single poetised exponent, not a young athletic revival of former times; or they have lived in an ideal world, as Shelley,—but then that world was their own creation, and entirely absorbed them, or they have believed in and reproduced their own age, together with our long anterior, as Milton,—but then their other subject matter was religion, or, in another way, as Shakespeare, they have recast all ages on their own mind, or were fairly conscious of the difference between the ages, as Chaucer and Dante. But it will strike every reader how decidedly Scott's practical conception of the past, and his relations to the present, differ from those just enumerated. As a child of the critical eighteenth century, and the son of a shrewd Scotch orator, Scott was, on one side, a born sceptic in romance, the Middle Ages, and Jacobinism;—as a cadet of the Scotts of Harden, and a man of the strongest imaginative temperament, he was likewise a born believer. Now, not only his writings, which in the strictest sense reproduce himself, but his life and character, present a continual half-conscious attempt at a real and practical compromise between these opposing elements. In the details, what struck his contemporaries was plain but genial common sense, in the whole, what strikes the later student is the predominance of the practical impulse. Whilst the peculiar blending of the elements is what gives Scott his place in our literature, and renders him singularly interesting as a man, it cannot be concealed that it carried certain weaknesses with it: he had *les défauts de ses qualités*. And in this compromise between past and present, romance and prose, which he attempted, beside that great and long continued error which ruined his worldly prosperity, and dispossessed him of the castle of his dreams, one may note some minor inconsistencies, which have exposed him to censure from those who did not observe the peculiarity of his nature. Thus, although naturally one of the most independent of men, we find him treating the Prince Regent with an almost servility of deference, when offered the Poet Laureateship, although a Lowland Scot, only distantly and dimly sharing in Highland blood through

a Campbell ancestor (the clan, we may remark in passing, towards which his writings show a marked dislike), when the Prince, then George IV, visited Edinburgh, Scott gave the pageantry of the reception a completely Celtic character,—forgetting at once not only that national feud between Lowlander and Highlander which he had been the first to set forth before the whole world, but even the historical proprieties of the occasion. He appeared himself in Highland dress, whilst the heir of the Hanoverian line wore the “Steuart tartan.” Scott’s Border sympathies, again, led him to regard the profession of arms with a somewhat extreme admiration; but when his son desires to enter the army, he regrets the choice. In his politics we observe the same uncertain direction, whilst feeling in the strongest way for the poor, and by nature hostile to the violence and unfairness of party, we find him ever and anon lowering himself to the petty interests of the Toryism of Edinburgh, or abetting the coarse repression of popular spirit which discredited the Administrations of the time, and then, with a fitter sense of his vocation in life, adding a “so much for politics—about which, after all, my neighbours the *Blackcocks* know about as much as I do” (Lockhart’s “Life of Scott,” iii : 209, the edition of 1856, in ten volumes, is that quoted).—That the reader may understand the kind of character who will be presented to him, these points are noted here, they will be illustrated by the details which follow. But is not Scott, in all this antithetically blended nature, shrewdness in details, romance in the whole,—minor inconsistencies, with a general unity and individuality of character,—a perfect type of the common sense combined with the *ingenium perferendum Scotorum*, a true representative of the great race amongst which it was the dearest pride of his heart to be numbered?

## I

“Every Scotchman,” says Sir Walter Scott in his brief Autobiography, “has a pedigree.” We need not trace his back in detail beyond his great-grandfather, the staunch old Jacobite known as *Beardie*, who died in 1729. Beardie’s second son, Robert, a Whig, drove and sold the cattle which had been the plunder of his reiving ancestors, at other times farming the small estate of Sandyknowe or Smalholm, midway between Melrose and Kelso. By marriage with a Haliburton, Robert Scott became for a time proprietor of Dryburgh Abbey. The eldest son, Walter, born 1729, settled in Edinburgh as a “Writer to the Signet,” and in that city, after the loss of several infants, Walter, third son of six children who survived, was born, August 15, 1771. His mother, Anne Rutherford, was daughter to a distinguished professor of medicine in the University, and a lady of the ancient family of Swinton; and “joined to a light and happy temper of



mind, a strong turn to story poetry and works of imagination." Beyond these rudiments, a little taken even of Scott's mother to support the popular fancy which exerts a fatal attraction to maternal qualities; in fact, the father, a man of fine but singular dispositions, fills a far larger space in the reminiscences of the poet's earlier years, and was, long after, painted by him with loving fidelity in "Red-groomed." A fever in infancy rendered Walter lame in his right leg, and he was sent for recovery to his grandfather Robert, at Sandyknowe. From this place, where Scott was nursed for about two years, dated his earliest recollections. Tales of the Jacobites, and of Border life and its heroes, neither as yet too distant for genuine tradition, were soon taught him; "Merry-men all," he says, "of the persecution and calling of Robin Hood and Little John;" and one can imagine the romantic disguise under which the violent deeds of "Auld Watt of Harden" and the rest, were presented by family pride to the child who was to immortalize them. As to the Bath and cure, where was made for the sake of Walter's health, and he so far threw off the weakness of limb that, until the early decay of his constitution, it hardly disjoined him from any vigorous exercise. Scott's lameness, like Byron's, impelled his eager and courageous disposition to a more than average display of physical energy; one may trace to it, in some degree, the rather overstrained emphasis laid by Scott on field sports and volunteer drill whilst his strength lasted; excess in which, not improbably, was one reason why he found himself an old man before fifty; (1820, ii: 269.) Ingenious excuses are never wanting to give the body more than its due share, and when there is activity of mind also, as in Scott and Byron, it takes its revenge in premature decay. On the other hand, the boy's lameness had a nobler result; giving him leisure for a large range of reading,—miscellaneous indeed, but lying in those imaginative regions, the art of which strengthens the higher nature within us. He entered the Grammar School of Edinburgh in 1778. A letter written by a gifted lady presents an excellent picture of the child as he was at six,—indeed, of Scott as he remained through life:—"boy for ever," in Shakspeare's phrase, with the lasting childhood and sensitiveness of genius.

"I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. *There's the mast gone,* says he; *crash it goes!—they will all perish!* After his agitation, he turns to me. *That is too melancholy, I had better read you something more amusing.* I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully. . . . When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady [Mrs. Cockburn, the writer], *for I think she is a virtuoso like myself—Dear Walter,* says Aunt Jenny, *what is a virtuoso?—Don't ye know? Why, it's one who wishes and will know everything."*

Those about Scott may have been already impressed, like Mrs Cockburn, with his mental energy and determination to "know everything." But in the Autobiography he adopts another tone, which reappears in his later letters. He was conscious that industry had not come to him without a struggle. About one of his brothers he remarks, that he had "the same determined indolence that marked us all." No description could, at first sight, appear less applicable to himself. If there be one constant attribute of real genius, it is vast capacity for and enjoyment of labour. Genius often makes us feel that it is almost synonymous with *patience*, as Buffon and Reynolds called it. And it would be difficult to find a man of genius whose recorded works,—never more than a portion of the man's whole work,—are more extensive and varied than Scott's. He had, in the highest degree, another charming quality, often, though not so essentially an attribute of intellectual excellence—Modesty. Hence, throughout his life he undervalued himself, and thought little of his own energy. Yet we cannot doubt that this "determined indolence," like the irritability of temper which he so subdued that few suspected its existence, was a real element in his nature. At school (1778-1783), Scott's zeal for study is inferior to the ardour of Shelley; he takes not the slightest interest in what is not only the most perfect, but the most essentially "romantic" of literatures,—that of Greece, even in Latin going only far enough to set the highest value upon the modern verse of Buchanan, and after him, on Lucan and Claudian. He was satisfied with a working knowledge of French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Perhaps the family failing expended itself in confining his studies to the circle marked out by strong creative impulse, the history, manners, romances, and poetry of mediæval and modern Europe. Looking back now at the result, the Poems and the Novels, one is inclined to say that Scott in all this followed the imperious promptings of nature. This, however, was not his own judgment. He regretted nothing more bitterly than his want of the severe classical training. "I forgot the very letters of the Greek alphabet," he says in the Autobiography of 1808, "a loss never to be repaired, considering what that language is, and who they were who employed it in their compositions." And again, "I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation." Within the range noticed, however, his "appetite for books was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable, few ever read so much," he adds, "or to so little purpose." Spenser, Tasso's "Jerusalem" in the English, "above all, Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry," are specified; and although throughout his life Scott exhibited a reluctance to employ his powerful mind on subjects requiring hard thought, and was disposed to defer any work upon which he was engaged to the last, yet in the main we may regard the "determined indolence" as absorbed into the meditative atmosphere (if we may use the word) of the poetical nature as the undersoil whence so many masterpieces

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of imaginative writing were destined to grow. There is a strong general likeness on this point between Scott and the private of his contemporaries in poetry, and the words in which Wordsworth described himself would have borne an equal application to his friend:—

My world I feel I have had in pleasant thought  
 And life's few years were a time of good.

"My life," Scott himself says, is one of the most remarkable pages of his Diary (Dec. 27, 1823), "though not without its fits of weeping and strong exertion, has been a sort of dream, spent in

(The) people cut of sweet and bitter day

I have worn a wedding cap, the power of which has been to divert present griefs by a touch of the wind of imagination, and gild over the future by prospects more far than can be realised." Scott's character was essentially formed and finished in early youth, and these words may be considered the key to his whole career and character. Worldly wisdom, love of social rank, passion for lands and goods,—these are the motives by which it has been often assumed that he was guided. Mr. Carlyle even appears in his remarkable Essay to regard Scott as unentitled to the claim of greatness, because he did not throw his strength into grasping the problems of modern life or the eternal difficulties of human thought,—and treats him as an eminently genial and healthy man of the world, whose writings were rather pieces of stylish and rapid manufacture for the day, than likely to prove "heirlooms for ever." But so "enthusiastically mixed" was his nature, that at the same time he was in the spirit hidden away with poetry and the past, and moving among romantic worlds of his own creation. Viewed from one side, Scott, as printer and lawyer, with "a thread of the attorney in him," as "Jard" and man of society, appears in unromantic contrast to most of his "brothers in immortal verse." Viewed from another, it may be doubted whether any of his contemporaries lived the life of the poet so completely.

A strong capacity for such work as his nature secretly preferred, and towards which he was unconsciously finding his way, marks the boyhood of Scott. This found its main exercise at first in a love for inventing and relating marvellous tales which amounted to real passion. "Whole holidays were spent in this pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose." "He used to interest us," writes a lady who was then his playmate, "by telling us the *travels*, as he called them, which he had lying alone . . . Child as I was, I could not help being highly delighted with his description of the glories he had seen. . . . Recollecting these descriptions," of which we cannot but

regret that she preserved no memorial, "radiant as they were, I have often thought since, that there must have been a bias in his mind to superstition—the marvellous seemed to have such power over him, though the mere offspring of his own imagination, that the expression of his face, habitually that of genuine benevolence, mingled with a shrewd innocent humour, changed greatly while he was speaking of these things, and showed a deep intenseness of feeling, as if he were awed even by his own recital" Scott, as he was throughout life, is again before us in this little delineation, the kindness, the superstition, the shrewdness and of *Eddy* sees "Waverley" and "Lammermoor" in their infancy.

Meanwhile that other element of poetry which is only second in Scott's writings to the picture of human life,—the natural landscape,—began to assert its influence over him. Actors were thronging fast within the theatre of his imagination; the first sketches of the background and scenery for the drama were now supplied. From a visit to Kelso, "the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland," Scott traced his earliest consciousness of the magic of Nature. Wordsworth's passion was for

the Visions of the hills  
And Souls of lonely places

The passion of Scott differed from this through the leading place which historical memories held in his heart. "The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind gradually rested upon and associated themselves with the grand features of the landscape around me, and the historical incidents or traditional legends connected with many of them gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe." Scott's transfer from the Edinburgh High School to the College (1783-1786), probably gave him the first freedom to indulge this impulse within bounds which, though narrow in themselves, were of inexhaustible interest to his sympathetic imagination. Without "travelling over half the globe" he could create a realm of his own, sufficient for himself and for his readers. It is astonishing to look at the map, and observe within how small a radius from Edinburgh the hundred little places lie which he has made familiar names throughout the whole civilized world.—We have noticed that Scott's father, (with himself in youth,) is painted in "Redgauntlet." Nothing was ever better contrasted in a romance than these two characters, and one sees that the real *Alan Fairford* was already beginning at college those adventurous ways which may have made the old Wreter to the Signet feel that the wild moss-trooping blood of Harden was once more at work within the veins of his gallant boy. A wise confidence left

Walter free. He wandered for days together over the historical sites of the neighbourhood, and when at home, in lieu of devotion to the prosaic mysteries of the Scottish law, was able to please his fancy by founding that collection of wayside songs and historical relics which filled so large a space in the innocent happiness of his after-years, and was not less a necessary of life to him than his cabinet of rocks and minerals is to the geologist.

The mode in which Scott observed Nature is strictly parallel to his representation of human life. As he rarely enters into the depths of character, preferring to exhibit it through action, and painting rather the great general features of an age than dwelling on the details for their own sake, so he mainly deals with the landscape; two or three admirable pictures excepted. Compare his descriptions with those by Wordsworth, Keats, or Shelley, and the difference in regard to the points noted will be felt at once. Scott was aware of this. "I was unable," says the Autobiography, "with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other. . . . I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety." A curious testimony is borne to the truth of this remark by Scott's failure (like Goethe's) to master even the rudiments of landscape drawing. "Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or of hand was totally ineffectual." But this absence of power over landscape forms was compensated for by a singularly fine perception of colour, examples of which have been given by Mr. Ruskin in the interesting criticisms on Scott contained in his "Modern Painters." Scott's almost total want of ear for music was a calamity which he shared with a large number of great poets; the strong sense of the melody in words and the harmonies of rhythm appearing to leave no space in their organisation for articulate music.

—Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter.

if true at all, is true only of the poet.

Beside the irresistible impulse which directed Scott's reading to "romantic" and poetical literature, to story telling, and to country wanderings, he was seriously impeded by illness from pursuing his college studies. And by the time the Academical course was concluded, the passion which governed his youth, and perhaps secretly coloured the complexion of his future life, had already fallen upon him. Little has been told of this early love: force of feeling, and force to repress the signs of feeling, are two of the principal elements in Scott's character; he undergoes evil with a pathetic simplicity; he suffers in silence. From what, however, we can learn, it is natural to read in the "love that never found his earthly close" the true source of that peculiar shade of pensive melancholy which runs like a silver thread through almost everything he wrote, is heard as a "far-off Aeolian note" in all his

poetry, and breaks out at last during his later years of misfortune with strange power in his "Journal." This strong passion kept him safe from "the ambush of young days," and threw over his whole life the halo of a singular purity. Meantime the first result was probably to reconcile him to work for his livelihood, and even prepare for following his father's profession — alien from Scott's nature as a conveyancer's office must have been. He was bound apprentice for four years (1786-1790). An acquaintance with Scottish law, which he used with effect in some of his novels, was the chief fruit of this apprenticeship, for we can hardly reckon as a gain that half-introduction to business habits on which he afterwards relied with so fatal a security. It was not, however, as a "Writer to the Signet" that Scott finally entered the law (1792), having been turned towards the more liberal career of an Advocate by the influence of the gently-born intellectual society with which he now became familiar. Burns, of whom he has left a striking description, he only saw; but with most or all of the remaining eminent Scotchmen of the time he was acquainted. Clerk of Eldin, Corehouse, Jeffrey, and before long the dearest of his early friends, William Erskine, are prominent amongst many other names; for men lived together then after the most social fashion in Edinburgh (that excellent feature in life which is lost when capital cities grow large), and clubs and conviviality of all kinds abounded. This was a brilliant stage in Scott's career; perhaps the most essentially happy — love, fearful yet warm with hope; open, numerous, and equal friendships, the first introduction to the literature most congenial to his nature, that of Germany, last, not least, the first sight of the Scottish Highlands. These regions, the romantic manners of which were to be so brightly printed in his writings, by one of the curious contrasts which are frequent in his life, he entered on a legal visit to visit certain Maclarens, — as he was afterwards the first to carry a gig, Mr Carlyle's symbol of modern "respectability," into the depths of Liddesdale.

This district, under the name of which the best of the Scottish Marches are apparently included, lay within view of Scott's future home, and was the true nursing-ground of his genius. Great as he is in describing scenes from Scottish history, great in his pictures of the Highlands, great in delineating life in Edinburgh or Perth or Glasgow, he seems to move with the largest and freest step when his tale or song is of the Border. For several successive years (1792-1798) he appears to have made excursions thither, (partially under the excuse of professional business,) when he explored the wild recesses, and observed the wilder life of a race who had not yet been civilized into uniformity; drinking in enjoyment at every pore, "feeling his life," as Wordsworth says of the child, "in every limb;" and as the friend who guided him through the land truly observed, *makin' himsell a' the time*. This friend, Mr. Shortreed, was of no small value to Scott. Already he began to show one attribute of genius, — that of attracting others to co-operate with him. The old ballads, in collecting which he was assisted by Shortreed,

formed the basis of the first book in which Scott displayed his originality; and we soon after find that he gained similar aid from Dr. Lillott, Messrs Skene, Ritson, Leyden, and finally from Mr. Frazer, who provided some of the most effective materials for the *Novels*, and plays an important though hidden part through Scott's life.

This was the time when the shock of the French Revolution recoiled with the greatest force upon the country. England had joined that monarchical alliance which aimed at compelling France to restore the order of things lately swept away, which had succeeded only in uniting France as one man against her invaders, and which now, in turn, feared revengeful invasion from the armies of the Republic. It is well known how powerfully and diversely the stirring politics of the time affected thinking men in these islands. The movement which was inspiration to Wordsworth, was reaction to Scott. It converted the political Jacobinism which was part of his imaginative inheritance from older days into a fervent Toryism. This ardour impelled him now (1797) to take the lead in forming a body of Volunteer Cavalry, for which the political creed then dominant in Scotland afforded him ready followers. Something also of Scott's traditional interest in matters relating to war blended with his patriotic energy; and even the wish to prove, despite of nature, that lameness was no hindrance to physical activity, had its part in the rather excessive zeal with which for some years he threw himself into this mimic and (happily) bloodless campaigning. With similar fervency he entered into the politics of the day. But politics, like poetry, must be studied as an art with the best powers of the mind, if a man is to reach valid conclusions, or show himself a practical statesman; and as Scott, throughout his career, hardly gave to political questions more than the leisure moments of a powerful mind, there is no reason for wonder if this be not the most satisfactory feature in his life, nor one which needs detain the biographer. Scott's insight failed him here; and, as with his study of the law, the only valuable fruit of the years devoted to cavalry drill was a certain accuracy,—contested of course by professional critics,—in his descriptions of warfare. It may be suspected that he and Gibbon pleased themselves with finding, in the vividness of their narratives of battle, some tangible result from months wasted in camp. Genius, however, returns always to its natural track, and abandons imperfect interests. But Scott was as yet totally unaware of his proper vocation. Already indeed love had drawn from him a few lines of exquisitely tender sadness: he had translated the ballad "Lenore" from the German of Burger, and may have been at work upon Goethe's early drama "Goetz," yet he almost prided himself upon contempt of literature as a man's work in life. How singular is this utter self-unconsciousness! Here was the man who was to turn the minds of a whole nation to the picturesque and romantic side of poetry. He was to restore an ideal loyalty to the later Stuarts. He was to make the Middle Ages live once more. But, engrossed as he was at this time by foreign

revolutions, no one in Edinburgh could have known less than the youthful Advocate of the change, itself hardly less than a revolution, which he was destined to work in the thoughts and sentiments of his fellow-creatures

## II

We now approach the second step in Scott's life. In the course of 1796 the long dream of youthful love was over. Little has been told, perhaps little was divulged, of the reasons for the final decision, the lines above alluded to, (those "To a Violet" in the following collection,) cannot be regarded as strict evidence to the facts; and Scott's stern habit of repression where he felt most, has concealed from us not only what he was compelled to bear, but how he bore it. He "had his dark hour" during a solitary ride in Perthshire, the wise sympathy of a friend (afterwards Countess of Purgstall) was some little aid; but the wound bled inwardly, and the evidence appears strong, that, like all passion suppressed in deference to ideas of manliness or philosophy, this worked in him with a secret fever. However these things may have been, next year he married (Dec. 1797) a pretty Mdlle. Charpentier, (daughter to a French lady, one of the royalist emigrants,) whom he met and wooed at the little watering-place, Gilsland, in Cumberland,—a village which he afterwards described in his only novel of contemporary life, the tragic "St Ronan's Well." A very brief acquaintance preceded their engagement, it is probable that the congruity of sentiment and taste between them was comparatively slight, and at the distance of "sixty years since" and more, it may be allowable to add that although attended by considerable happiness, faithful attachment on his wife's part, and much that gave a charm to life, this marriage does not appear to have fully satisfied the poet's inner nature.

We are here referring to that more hidden and more sensitive side of existence which it is the fate,—not altogether the happier fate,—of the poet to live; which makes the difference between him and other men, and to trace which, as delicately but firmly as we may, is the essential object of the biographer. But it is not meant that Scott would have been conscious of anything incomplete in this chapter of his story. Not only did he find the substantial blessings of home in his marriage, but it incidentally led him to the felicity, inferior to that alone, of practically discovering his own work in life. He now (1798) took a house in Castle Street, Edinburgh, and a cottage at Lasswade, within the north-eastern end of Eskdale. The first was for his attendance at the bar, where he "swept the boards of the Outer House," waiting for briefs which rarely came, and enjoying to the full the cheery convivialities and frank goodfellowship of his town friends. Meantime, his heart was gradually withdrawn to Lasswade, where he could live in the past with poetry



and history; where the old Scottish memories to which Burns himself was not attached with more devoted passion, were around him; where, also, began his friendship with the chief herse of his clan. To the three peers who bore the title of Buccleuch between this time and his death, especially to Charles, fourth duke, Scott was attracted by the whole force of his nature: not only respecting them with feudal devotion as lords of his blood and family, but loving them as men who sympathised deeply with him in the views of life, religion, politics, relations between rich and poor, home-pursuits and affections; and who systematically used great wealth and power for the happiness of their friends and dependants. There are no pages in Scott's life more pleasing than those which print his intimacy with this truly noble family group; here he carried out with the greatest success his poetical identification between the old world and the new; and to him, in turn, the family name owes a distinction beyond that of Montmorency, Dillberg, or Howard. Under these and other combining influences Scott now added to the ancient Border Ballads, which he was collecting, his own original poems,—some, written for Lewis' *Tales of Wonder*, based on German sentiment, others founded upon the native songs, to which he gave a wider plan with consummate taste. He printed (1799) his translation from Goethe's play, and becoming acquainted with Ellis, Ritson, Heber, and others of that excellent band of scholars by whom our knowledge of the Middle Ages was placed upon a sure footing, turned resolutely to the study of mediæval imaginative literature, which (1802) issued in the "*Border Minstrelsy*."

This book marks the great crisis in Scott's life. Henceforth, even if unconsciously to himself, his real work is literature. The publication was not only the first that made his name known, but led Scott into what proved the most serious business transaction of his life. Many years before he had made friends with James Ballantyne, a young man of whose ability and disposition he thought highly. Ballantyne printed the "*Minstrelsy*;" at Scott's advice he established a house in Edinburgh; and by 1805 the two became partners in trade. Before long, taking a younger brother, John, into the concern, they added a publishing house to the printing; and Scott's fortune and fall were in due time the result. This partnership is on all accounts the least agreeable chapter in Scott's life, it is only of interest now as illustrating his character. The essence of that character has been defined as an attempt at a practical, not less than at an imaginative compromise between past and present,—between prose (one might almost say) and poetry; ideals realized and realities idealized. The trade-partnership fatally partook in this perilous and delicate compromise. Beside the final loss of wealth and health, Scott's memory has been hence exposed to some misinterpretation. In face of the result, and the clear proofs how it came to pass, he has received almost equal honours for his practical sense and for his greatness in romantic literature. Two men, in fact, are painted in the one Scott of the "*Biography*;"

the able man of the world in his office, and the poet in his study: giving, with equal mastery and ease, an hour to verse and an hour to business, and appearing to his friends meantime as the Scottish gentleman of property. Now, such a compound being as this could hardly have existed. It is against nature: and, if the estimate here given be correct, there is no nature which it is less like than Scott's. Where the poetical character truly exists, it always predominates; it cannot put off the poet like a dress, and assume the lawyer or the laird, it "moveth altogether, if it move at all." This point must be insisted on, because it is vital to understanding the man and his work. The very speciality of Scott is, not that he presented the ideal gentleman just described, who wrote poetry and novels as pastime, and entered into business like a shrewd Scotchman who knew the worth of money, but that he valued wealth in order to embody in visible form his inner world of romance, and lived more completely within the circle of his creations than any of his contemporaries. This poetical temperament has its perils, and might have driven a less healthy nature into injurious isolation and eccentricity. But, as a man of eminently sane mind and genial disposition, and fortified by the training of his early years, Scott had not to go out of the world, as it were, in order to "idealize realities." The common duties of life glowed into romance for him, his friends, Lowland and Highland, were dear not only in themselves, but as representatives of the two historical races of the land; his estate, when he bought one, was rather an enclosure of ancient associations, a park of poetry, if the phrase may be allowed, decorated with "a romance in stone and lime," than what the Lords of Harden and Bowhill would have looked on as landed property.

The picture here drawn, although different from the estimate often taken of Scott, rests upon the evidence of his writings, and of the copious materials contained in the Biography, and not only answers to what we read of his sentiments and mode of thought, conscious or unconscious, but can alone explain how he came to be the author of the poems and the novels. Mr Lockhart describes him as the finished man of the world. Mr Carlyle, again, seems to speak of him as, in the main, a manufacturer of hasty books for the purpose of making money and a landed estate to rival neighbouring country-gentlemen. Both views appear to be unintentionally unjust to Scott, and discordant with his recorded character, and both fail equally to explain how such imaginative writing as his in prose and verse had any room to come into being. Some great artists, we read, have enjoyed the possession of wealth. Others have been gratified by social position. But in what art has the love of money, or the love of rank, ever been the root of masterpieces? Who has moved the world with these levers? You cannot grow poetry without the poetical soil. If at first sight this be less visible in Scott than in men like Byron or Shelley, may not the reason be, not that the nature of the poet was absent, but that it was more closely and curiously combined with the man of

common life than in others? The writer, at least, desires to submit this view as the possible solution of a difficult problem.

Walter Scott, it will probably be agreed, ranks among the great of our race, both as a writer and as a man; but in his portrait, as in every true portrait, there are shadows. Some weakness is blended intimately with his strength; as we have noticed, he cannot escape "the weak side of his gifts." His wish was certainly to conceal his inner or practical mind from the world. Perhaps he sometimes concealed it from himself. One fallacy hence arising (to return now to his commercial affairs), was an overestimate of his practical powers. "From beginning to end, he piqued himself on being a man of business." Again & this it is probably enough to set the fact, that the books of his house were never fairly balanced till they were in the hands of his creditors. That the Ballantyne brother had, each in his way, equally vague ideas on the matter, was known perfectly to Scott, who by 1812 found himself involved in his first difficulties. Then the vast success of the Novels, once more flouted the hesitations; but although the partnership was enlarged by the admission of a really able commercial man, Constable the publisher, the reckless spirit which his adventurous nature brought with him, combined with the peculiar money difficulties of 1825, only hastened the concluding bankruptcy of 1826. These twenty years of business, unclouded from the outset, have supplied materials for a long dispute, with whom the fault justly rested. But enough has been here stated to explain the general case; we need not go further into a matter of which, with even more than usual truth, one might say that both sides were honestly wrong, and all partners in a catastrophe for which all were responsible. The so-called *men of letters and plain commerce*, as we daily see, were not one atom more truly entitled to the epithet, than the romantic Poet. But, - what had the "Aristo of the North" to do in concerns like this?

A probable element in the ultimate failure of the House of Ballantyne and Company was the fact that the partner with capital sedulously concealed himself from the public. The news that Scott was one of the firm startled the world far more than the news that he was the sole author of the "Waverley Novels." It is obvious in how many ways this concealment must have hampered business. One reason of it was a certain pleasure in mystery, inherent in Scott's nature, and displayed also when "Tigerlily" and "Harold" were published. The wish was, that both of these poems should be taken for the work of his friend Erskine. In case of the Novels, however, the desire to escape the nuisance of commonplace praise and free flattery was a further inducement. It was not so wise a motive that co-operated to prompt the commercial *measures*. It might have been expected that he would have been led to avoid this by natural shrewdness, and "the thread of the attorney in him." But the peculiarity of Scott is that something dream-like and imaginative, together with something practical and prosaic, unites in all the more important phases of his life; past and present, romance and reality,

meet in him at once, he is in the world and not in it, as it were, at the same time; he is almost too unselfconscious. The favourable side of this strangely balanced nature has been already indicated, it gave us in his Poems and Novels together the most brilliant and the most diversified "spectacle of human life" which we have had since Shakespeare, it gave Scott himself many years of pure and peculiar happiness. On the other hand, we have the failure, after long-continued struggles, of his material prosperity, and (closely connected with this) the narrow and even unjust view which he always took, or rather, took always in public, of literature and his own share in it. He could not fully work out his ideal of life, however we interpret it; his career has many curious inconsistencies. There is nothing which Mr. Lockhart notes more pointedly than Scott's aversion from what is called "literature as a profession." He endorses with approval, as Scott's own view, the words of a friend, who wrote in 1799 to encourage him in perseverance at the bar, "I rather think men of business have produced as good poetry in their by-hours as the professed regulars." an assertion of which (it need hardly be added) the writer does not furnish any proof. To the same effect it is added (1815) "that Scott never considered any amount of literary distinction as entitled to be spoken of in the same breath with mastery in the higher departments of practical life. To have done things worthy to be written, was in his eyes a dignity to which no man made any approach, who had only written things worthy to be read," and the steam-engine, safety-lamp, and campaigns of the Duke of Wellington are presently named as examples.

There can be no doubt that the biographer has here truly reported, not merely what he admired Scott for thinking, but Scott's own conscious idea regarding his life. And if this had been the whole truth, there can equally be no doubt that we should never have had a "Marmion" or a "Bride of Lammermoor." Indeed, except as the opinion of so distinguished a man as Scott, it would hardly deserve examination. For what human being would seriously pretend to compare with each other things so generically different as a battle, a scientific invention, and a song? In what balances should we weigh "Othello" and Trafalgar, the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel and "The Advancement of Learning,"—or decide which has been of most value to England? How is the one less a "deed" than the other? Scott's profound modesty as to his own genius was undoubtedly one motive in his estimate of literature, but even this could not have blinded so sensible a man to its untenability, had he not been swayed by something of that instinct for living an old-world life in the present, which lay at the root of his character. We have here one of his practical anachronisms. He puts himself in the place of the Minstrel of the "Lay" at Newark, he leans to the time when hands were more honoured, at least more powerful, than brains; he wavers in the delicate compromise which was to have united the spirit of Scott of Harden and Scott of Abbotsford. A similar sentiment governs his aversion from "literature as a pro-

lesson." Much might be said for and against this feeling; yet it is hardly more true of Goldsmith, Southey, or T. B. Key, than that they made letters their profession, than of Walter Scott. These men, who were workmen, he properly classed as literature have written so much, or so voluminously; more probably, have earned more by their writings. What he actually was—as a man of business, meanwhile, is recorded in his life. What he was as a lawyer has been described by himself. "My profession and I" (by 1800) "came to stand nearly upon the footing which honest Slenker comended himself on having established with Mistress Ann Page, *There were no great fees taken in at the law, and a poor fellow had to do most of it on farther expensure.*" In fact, at the point where we left the narrative, Scott, already enriched by his marriage, was about to obtain the Sheriff-deputeship of Selkirkshire; and soon after (1806) he left the bar for a Clerkship of Session;—offices which, together gave him a good income, and had the additional advantage of duties that, except a certain amount of attendance and of rapid and accurate penmanship, were almost nominal. The criticism to which these pleasant places seem to have exposed Scott from those who did not share in his political devotion to the house of Dundas, then paramount in Scotland, was unfair; but one cannot say that he is entitled to more than the praise of prudence for obtaining ease and leisure by this ancient and easy method:

DUNN'S CHARACTERISTICS

And, in fact, before the salary from the clerkship, held at first in reversion, fell in, the sale of Scott's works was already beginning, both directly in itself and indirectly through his partnership with the Ballantynes, to surpass, as it before long reduced to comparative insignificance, any sources of revenue,—except those which he thus derived from the "profession of literature."

Though, however, has been said on Scott's practical, though morally blameless, inconsistency in this section of his career. Important as the matter of income was for many years to his healthy enjoyment of existence, and at last in giving a direction to his writing, its real importance lies in that to which we gladly turn,—that he was thus enabled to live the life for which he had been planned by Nature. Is not what is most desirable for man contained in this, when "Nature's holy plan" happens to be such as she marked out for Scott? There are several types of a noble life, some of which may be loftier or more striking than his; yet we do not see how he could have done his peculiar work otherwise. One of the masters in the highest human knowledge,—the science of man's nature,—defined the perfection of life as "the serene exercise of thought" (we must thus paraphrase his own word *Theoria*), "in a state of independence, and leisure, and security so far as man may attain it, together with a complete measure of his days; for nothing incomplete can enter into blessedness. Such a life," he however adds, "would be in itself above the height of humanity." Perhaps Wordsworth

approached this ideal nearer than any distinguished man of Scott's generation, and it is easy to see the features in which Scott fell short, yet on the whole, if the estimate here taken be just, he also was not far from the lofty standard of Aristotle.

We return to trace Scott's career, fortunate, if we have truly and distinctly traced what manner of man he was, for it is only if we feel this, that Mr. Lockhart's detailed narrative of his life, the interest of which cannot be transferred to an abridgment, gains its fullest charm and significance. Some contemporary poets now became friends of Scott, he had only seen Burns as a boy, and it is curious that, closely as their lines met in some points, Burns has left no sign of influence on Scott's writings. A greater effect was produced by his intercourse with Wordsworth, whose elevation and simplicity of mind impressed Scott with a sense of his predominance, not the less striking because it was not consciously avowed. The same tacit recognition is traceable in Byron; one seems also to find it among all Wordsworth's contemporaries in verse, they know that he is the head of the family. "Differing from him in very many points of taste," writes Scott in 1820, "I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius." Wordsworth, in turn, has recorded his estimate of Scott's power as a poet in some memorable verses, his feeling for the man in an early letter "Your sincere friend, for such I will call myself, though slow to use a word of such solemn meaning to any one." (ii. 167)—Scott had for some years been Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and that he might live within the district he now (1804) moved to Ashiestiel, a single house within the old Etnick Forest, upon the banks of Tweed, not much above its junction with Yarrow. "The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest verdure. Opposite, and all around, are the green hills. The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose." "Not equal in picturesque beauty to the banks of Clyde," says Scott himself, "but so sequestered, so simple, and so solitary, that it seems just to have beauty enough to delight its inhabitants." And again, as a crowning recommendation, he describes Ashiestiel to his friend the distinguished antiquary, Mr. G. Ellis: "In the very centre of the ancient Reged," otherwise known as the Scoto-British realm of Strathclyde. These passages are extracted, because the general descriptions apply also to the scenery of Abbotsford, except that the landscape is there wider, and more bare, and because they indicate one dominant motive in Scott's mind. The presence of ancient national associations was precisely the point which determined his choice of property—the *genius loci* which, with an overpowering influence, bound him all his life to the Border, and led him there from Italy to die.

By this time, through study, the collection of traditions, experience of men high or low in rank, solitary thought and imaginative vision, almost all the materials on which Scott was to work were ready. When the first fruits of this long preparation appeared in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" (1805), its success was not less surprising

Introductions to the "Lay" and "Marmion," and, less successfully, though even here with much grace, in "Friermaun;" but they are not wrought up into a whole, they do not form an integral portion of the poem. On the other hand, the metrical descriptions of scenery, if not more picturesque and vivid than those of the romances, tell more forcibly, they also relieve the narrative, by allowing the writer's own thoughts and interests to touch our hearts: an expedient used by Scott with singular skill. The "Edinburgh" of "Marmion" is a splendid example, but others are scattered through the less familiarly known poems, which, it is hoped, will in this edition find a fresh circle of readers, who are little likely to regret the study.

Scott's incompleteness of style, which is more injurious to poetry than to prose, his "careless glance and reckless rhyme," have been alleged by a great writer of our time as one reason why he is now less popular as a poet than he was in his own day, when from two to three thousand copies of his metrical romances were yearly sold. Beside these faults, which are visible almost everywhere, the charge that he wants depth and penetrative insight, has been often brought. He does not "wrestle with the mystery of existence," it is said, he does not try to solve the problems of human life. Scott, could he have foreseen this criticism, would probably not have been very careful to answer it. He might have allowed its correctness, and said that one man might have this work to do, but his was another. High and enduring pleasure, however conveyed, is the end of poetry. "Othello" gives this by its profound display of tragic passion. "Paradise Lost" gives it by its religious sublimity. "Childe Harold" by its meditative picturesqueness. the "Lay" by its brilliant delineation of ancient life and manners. These are but scanty samples of the vast range of poetry. In that house are many mansions. All poets may be seers and teachers; but some teach directly, others by a less ostensible and larger process. Scott never lays bare the workings of his mind, like Goethe or Shelley, he does not draw out the moral of the landscape, like Wordsworth, rather, after the fashion of Homer and the writers of the ages before criticism, he presents a scene, and leaves it to work its own effect on the reader. His most perfect and lovely poems, the short songs which occur scattered through the metrical or the prose narratives, are excellent instances. He is the most unselfconscious of our modern poets; perhaps, of all our poets, the difference in this respect between him and his friends Byron and Wordsworth is like a difference of centuries. If they give us the inner spirit of modern life, or of nature, enter into our perplexities, or probe our deeper passions, Scott has a dramatic faculty not less delightful and precious. He hence attained eminent success in one of the rarest and most difficult aims of Poetry,—sustained vigour, clearness, and interest in narration. If we reckon up the poets of the world, we may be surprised to find how very few (dramatists not included) have accomplished this, and may be hence led to estimate Scott's rank in his art more justly. One looks through the English poetry of the first half of the century in vain, unless it be here and

there united in Keats's for a few powers of really the same to melt into others as that of Scott. His contemporaries Crabbe's excepted, put no restriction. The points were characteristically novel. They drew the mind, but they never lost the fibres. It would be rash to try to draw a balance between them, each suggests in a dozen ways the points of view could not be put into the other's path; all are first-rate in their kind; and every reader can choose the style which, even in the highest, is best suited to his own pleasure.

It is, however, only by considering Scott in relation to his own age and the circumstances in which he formed his self, that we can reach a full estimate of him as a poet. The mode of viewing a man, it is true, has been a matter of great importance. Goethe is in a sense the child of its century, in another it is father. Circumstances explain much; but they do not account for it. The individuality of the poet will always be the central point in him; there is an element in the soul inaccessible to the most scientific analysis of a man's surroundings. But much light is undoubtedly gained by examining them. Scott received early, as we have seen, his direction in literature. Coming at the close of an age of criticism, he inaugurated an age of revival and of creation. It has been already noticed that there was something of reaction in this. Love of the ballads of Scotland, of mediæval legends, of German romantic poetry, had unconsciously impressed his style upon him before 1800. Already his passion was to describe wild and adventurous characters, to delineate the natural landscape, to recast the persons of his drama in feudal times or in the common life around him. The weighty satire of Dryden or Johnson, the cultivated world of Pope, the classical finish of Gray, although admired for their own merits, had no share in his heart of hearts. The friend of Dr Blacklock, the child of the Edinburgh of Hume and Adam Smith, he was a "born romantic" without knowing it. Beyond any one he is the discoverer or creator of the "modern style." How much is implied in this! . . . It is true that by 1805 two other great leaders had already begun their career. Coleridge's fragment of "Christabel" was known to Scott, and influenced him in the "Lay." Wordsworth had published some of the most charming of his lyrics. But these men had as yet produced little effect, and the new faith nowhere found fewer believers than in Edinburgh; where, partly through the reluctance of the ordinary mind to accept originality, in part through the intense conservatism of literature, poets who now rank among the glories of England were treated as heretics with idle condemnation. It was some time before Scott could raise himself above this atmosphere, and say of the leading critic of the time, "Our very ideas of what is poetry differ so widely, that we rarely talk upon these subjects. There is something in Mr Jeffrey's mode of reasoning that leads me greatly to doubt whether he really has any feeling of poetical genius." Few people are now likely to dispute this estimate; and no one did more to discredit the narrow criticism prevalent sixty years since than Scott. If Lord Macaulay's



opinion be correct, that Byron's poetry served to introduce and to popularize Wordsworth's, Scott's even more decidedly cleared the way for "*Childe Harold*" and the "*Giaour*." Indeed, much in Byron is modelled upon the older poet, to whom he always looked up with a respectful affection which makes one of the brightest spots in his own chequered story. "Of all men Scott is the most open, the most honourable, the most amiable"

With the proceeds of "*Rokeby*" Scott made himself master of a cottage then called Clarty Hole, but soon characteristically renamed Abbotsford, close to the Tweed, about midway between Melrose, Ashiestiel, and Selkirk. Bare and essentially unimprovable is most of the land hereabout. Scott did something for it by planting,—the favourite outdoor employment of his middle life, yet to an English eye the trees have a poor, sad, nay (what from his work one did not expect), even a formal and unpicturesque air, the wider views over the Border are rather desolate than impressive, there is neither the sweet "pastoral melancholy" of Yarrow, nor the verdure and richness of Melrose. But to the inner eye of the poet this region displayed scenes more lovely than Sorrento, more romantic than Monte Rosa. There was the Roman way to the ford by the house, the "*Catrail*" which had bounded

Reged wide  
And fair Strath-Clyde;

the glen of Thomas the Rhymer, famous in fairy tradition, the haunted ruins of Boldside, the field of the battle of Melrose, the last great clan-fight of the Borders,—Melrose visible eastward, the Eildon Hills cleft into their picturesque serration by Michael Scott, south, Tweed flowing below the house and audible in it with its silver ripple. . . Some ambition to found a line of "*Scotts of Abbotsford*," fated not to be fulfilled, even some fancy less worthy of a great mind, to be himself a lord of acres, may have influenced him when he laid out so much money and energy on the lands of Abbotsford, and on the endless antiquarian details of the house which he built there. Yet many phrases in his writings, and, far more, what we know of Scott's nature through life, afford convincing proofs that the possessions he really and veritably sought for were these memories of the past—these relics of that ancient Scotland for which he felt, "like a lover or a child," with a rare and noble passion. Abbotsford, with its Gothic architecture,—tasteful and poetically imagined, if, to our more trained eyes, imperfect in many particulars—its armour and stained glass and carved oak, its library of precious mediæval lore, poetry and history, its museum of little things consecrated by great remembrances, to Scott was a place where actual life was beautified by the ideal of his imagination, a *Waverley* romance realized in stone, a castle of his waking dreams,—and held, also, as it proved, like those he sung of, rather by some fanciful and fairy tenure than by matter-of-fact possession. The gray mass of Abbotsford, with its sombre plantations, is not more enriched and glorified in

Forster's lovely drawing, than the helpship of the children across was to Scott by the pre-eminence of poet within him.

In 1811 Scott was one of a cheerful company who crossed round Scotland in a yacht engaged upon a pleasure voyage, touching at the Hebrides, Orkneys, Western Isles, and north of Ireland. A pleasant journal records the incidents of this trip, saddened at the close by the death of a dear friend, the Duchess of Buccleuch. It is a curious point of likeness between Scott and Goethe that, both being poets eminently interested in racing men, and cane, and wild nature, and both also personally independent, yet the journeys of both were remarkably limited. Goethe never saw London, Paris, or Vienna. Except a hasty trip in 1810, Scott made but this one visit to the North and West of Scotland, and hardly knew more of England than lay between Berwick and London. The world must have lost much by this, but it is possible that the poets were guided by a true instinct, and feared lest the amount and vividness of the impressions which would have poured in upon them might be overpowering to the free exercise of their genius.

With an exultation natural to him, Scott now welcomed the first fall of Napoleon. He also completed his valuable edition of Swift's works. But the year is most remarkable to his biographer through that event which marks the beginning of the third epoch in Scott's life,—the publication of "*Waverley*."

### III

During the period here closed, powerful rivals in poetry had risen to divide the popularity of Scott. Byron had carried the manner of his tales into more passionate regions of life. Crabbe had enlarged that gallery of human character which, if wanting in beauty, in originality and number stands alone amongst the poems of the time. The allegiance of those lovers of the inmost spirit of poetry who give the law to the next generation had been secured by Wordsworth. The brilliant dawn of Shelley was breaking on a yet unconscious world. Our modern school had passed the circle within which Scott had once been the chief magician. He felt this, and, never strictly a believer in his own powers, had already set himself to put into the prose form which suited it best some of the vast material which he had gathered; beginning with the last greatly romantic event in Scottish history. "*Waverley*," commenced in 1805 (whence the second title "*Sixty Years Since*"), taken up in 1810, was completed now, and published in July 1814. The last two volumes were written within three weeks of that summer of excitement, a fact of which Mr Lockhart tells a very striking anecdote (iv. 172, 3). From motives already touched on, Scott carefully concealed the authorship; and although long before his name was announced (1827) little

doubt remained in the minds of intelligent men, this first novel wanted the impulse of his already acquired fame yet the blow went home, the success was immediate, and the writer had once more "found himself" in literature.

A few more dates will mark, in a general way, the course of the writer's genius in this field "Guy Mannering" appeared in 1815, "The Antiquary" and "Old Mortality" next year, "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," 1818, "Bride of Lammermoor" and "Ivanhoe," 1819, "Kenilworth" and "The Pirate," 1821, "St Ronan's Well," 1823; the "Fair Maid of Perth," 1828 These may be considered the typical works of the series, though there is hardly one which does not display the wonderful versatility of their author Take even the feeblest of the "Waverley Novels," when shall we see the like again, in this style of romance?—Goethe was accustomed to speak of Scott as the "greatest writer of his time," as unique and unequalled When asked to put his views on paper, he replied with the remark which he made also upon Shakespeare, Scott's art was so high, that it was hard to attempt giving a formal opinion on it But a few words may be added on the relation borne by the Novels to the author's character Putting aside those written in depressed spirits and failing health, the inequality of merit in the remainder appears almost exactly proportioned, not to their date, but to the degree in which they are founded on Scottish life during the century preceding 1771 In this leading characteristic they are the absolute reproduction of the writer's own habitual thoughts and interests. Once more, we find in them a practical compromise between past and present. We have had no writer whose own country was more completely his inspiration But he is inspired by the "an countree" he had seen, or heard of from those who were old during his youth As he recedes from Scotland and from "sixty years since," his strength progressively declines. What we see as the series advances, are not so much signs that he had exhausted himself, as symptoms that he had exhausted the great situations of the century before his own birth, and "St Ronan's Well" remains the solitary proof that, had events encouraged Scott to throw himself frankly into contemporary life, he might (in the writer's judgment) have been first of the English novelists here, as he indisputably is in the romance of the past.

It has been observed that one of the curious contrasts which make up that complex creature, Walter Scott, is the strong attraction which drew him, as a Lowlander the born natural antagonist of the Gael, to the Highland people Looking back on the Celtic clans as we happily may, as a thing of the far past, softened by distance, coloured by the finest tints of poetry, and with that background of noble scenery which has afforded to many of us such pure and lofty pleasure, we cannot conceive without a painful effort that within a few years of Scott's own birth the Highlander had been to the Lowlander much what the Hindoo,—the Afghan or Mahratta at least,—is at present to the Englishman All that we admire in the Gael had been to the Scot proper the source of contempt and of repugnance Such a feeling is one of the worst instincts of human nature, it is an unmistakeable part of

the brute animal within us; more than any other cause, the hatred of race to race has hampered the progress of man. There is also no feeling which is more persistent and obstinate. But it has been entirely conquered in case of the Saxon and the Gael. Now this vast and salutary change in national opinion is directly due to Scott. Something of the kind might possibly have come with time; but he, in fact, was the man who set it on foot to accomplish it. This may be regarded, on the whole, as his greatest achievement. He united the sympathies of two hostile races by the sheer force of genius. He healed the bitterness of centuries. Scott did much in idealizing, as poetry should, the common life of his contemporaries. He equally did much in rendering the past history, and the history of other countries in which Scotchmen played a conspicuous part, real to us. But it is hardly a figure of speech to say, that he created the Celtic Highlands in the eyes of the whole civilized world.

If this be not first rate power, it may be asked where we are to find it. The admirable spirit and picturesqueness of Scott's poems and novels carry us along with them so rapidly, whilst at the same time the weaknesses and inequalities of his work are so borne upon the surface, that we do not always feel how unique they are in literature. Scott is often inaccurate in historical painting, and puts modern feeling into the past. He was not called upon, as we have noticed, to represent mental struggles, but the element of original thought is deficient in his creations. "Scott's," says an able critic, "is a healthy and genial world of reflection, but it wants the charm of delicate exactitude, we miss the consecrating power." (*National Review*, April, 1858). He is altogether inferior to Miss Austen in describing the finer elements of the womanly nature, we rarely know how the heroine feels; the author paints love powerfully in its effects and its dominating influence; he does not lead us to "the inmost enchanted fountain" of the heart. In creating types of actual human life Scott is perhaps surpassed by Crabbe; he does not analyze character, or delineate it in its depths, but exhibits the man rather by speech and action; he is "extensive" rather than "intensive;" has more of Chaucer in him than of Goethe; yet, if we look at the variety and richness of his gallery, at his command over pathos and terror, the laughter and the tear, at the many large interests beside those of romance which he realises to us, at the way in which he paints the whole life of men, not their humours or passions alone, at his unfading wholesomeness and freshness, like the sea and air and great elementary forces of Nature, it may be pronounced a just estimate which,—"without trying to measure the space which separates these stars,—places Scott second in our creative or imaginative literature to Shakespeare. "All is great in the Waverley Novels," said Goethe in 1831, "material, effect, characters, execution." Astronomers tell us that there are no fixed points in the heavens, and that earth and sun momentarily shift their bearings. An analogous displacement may be preparing for the loftiest glories of the human

intellect, Homer may become dim, and Shakespeare too distant. Perhaps the same fate is destined for Scott. But it would be idle to speculate on this, or try to predict the time when men will no longer be impressed by the vividness of "Waverley," or the pathos of "Lammermoor."

The leading idea of this sketch of Scott's character is, that, under the disguise of worldly sense and shrewdness, the poetical nature predominated in his life. In regard to his conduct and career, this point has perhaps been sufficiently illustrated. Looking at him now as an imaginative writer, from many causes, amongst which modesty and pride played an equal part, he has told us little of his own mind. Compared with Byron's (see the correspondence between them,—iii: 394), Scott's letters are superficial, until misfortune unveiled him to himself, there are no "Confessions" in his journal. Then we find, what discerning friends had long noticed, that the strong man had carried with him through life the sensitiveness of his childhood. One, to whose papers in *Fraser's Magazine* (1835-6) this sketch is indebted for some observations not found elsewhere, remarks that Scott was often subject to fits of abstraction, when he would be so completely absorbed in thick-coming fancies, that he became unconscious where he was, or what he was writing. Scott's stern repression and strong wish to do before the world only what the world does, render these points at once more hard to trace, and more significant. The emotion of such a character is deep in proportion to the resistance which it meets from the other elements. The fervour which melted Scott would have consumed a less powerful nature. When among scenes of wild Nature he was so rapt and excited that his friends felt it the wisest and kindest thing "to leave him to himself" (iv: 181). This was in the height of his vigour and assumed stoicism. Later on, but some time before decline had seized him, he writes, "The beauty of the evening, the sighing of the summer breeze, bring the tears into my eyes not unpleasantly." or again, "I spent the day wandering from place to place in the woods, idly stirred by the succession of a thousand vague thoughts and fears, the gay strangely mingled with those of dismal melancholy; tears which seemed ready to flow unbidden; smiles which approached to those of insanity." And then he adds, "I scribbled some verses, or rather, composed them in my memory." If the one eminent English critic who has expressed a formal judgment upon Scott as a writer, had not insisted chiefly upon the rapidity of his writings, treating them as superficial and transient in interest, it would have been unnecessary to dwell upon this point; it really is no more than that imagination is never displayed but by a man of imaginative mind, that poetry can be written only by a poet. But even the charge of overhaste appears to be pressed by Mr Carlyle too far. Scott's idea of poetical style, it must be allowed, errs upon the side of spontaneous impulse; he would rather be unfinished than overfinished, preferred vigour to refinement, and aimed at the qualities he admired in Dryden, "perpetual animation and elasticity of thought;" did not make the most of his admirable materials; atoned for the random and the reckless

by picture-queeness and movement. But there is nothing to be atoned for in perfect work; "incompleteness cannot enter into it;" the rival forces, as in Nature, balance each other. In a word, Scott's was the Gothic mind throughout, not the Greek; he wants that indefinable air of distinction which even the lesser ancient authors have, no writer of such power has furnished fewer quotations; "he used the first sufficient words which came uppermost;" he does not bring his idea to a consummate expression, such as incorporates itself within the memory; thought and the phrase, matter and spirit, rarely seem to form one indivisible whole. It is in this quarter that he is perhaps most in danger from the hand of Time. To say that such was Scott's nature, and that he did best to follow it, whether in his genius or in his life, would be to assume that he was incapable of the peculiar attribute of genius, its capacity for improvement. Yet we must not conclude that his writing cost him little, it should be remembered that he hardly touched original work till he was of mature age, and had collected vast stores; he is like the musician who plays the most difficult piece at sight, as the reward and the result of years of practice. "What infinite diligence in the preparatory studies; what truth of detail in the execution," said Goethe. The speed with which Scott actually composed, in fact, consumed him; the fire of heaven destroyed the conductor. When we read that "*Guy Mannering*" was completed within six weeks, we may say, "There things were his paralysis." Nothing came to Scott "in his sleep." "I will avoid," he says, in one of the few letters where he speaks out, "any occupation so laborious and agitating, as poetry must be to be worth anything" (vi. 400).

The one of all Scott's writings which has the highest qualities of pathos and of unity, — the one which, on the whole, may be called his greatest and most poetical, affords the clearest example of what this essay aims most at proving, the dominant intensity of the imaginative element in Scott. He dictated the "*Bride of Lammermoor*" while recovering from very severe illness (1819) — but on returning health, "when it was first put into his hands in a complete form, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained." Of all that we know about Scott, this incident is the most remarkable, especially if we recall the conspicuous sanity of his temperament; it casts the deepest light upon his nature; it shows how, when he wrote most powerfully, he was so inspired and penetrated by his subject that it flowed from him as if by a kind of rapture or possession, it makes one ready to say that, when least himself, he was most himself.

But many pages might be given to the criticism of Scott as a writer. It is time that we should resume his life, and try to complete the picture of his character. Scott had once or twice visited London in his earlier days, when he was known mainly as an antiquarian; in 1815 he was received there "with all the honours." "*Waverley*," everywhere recognized as his, put him at the head of our imaginative prose; as a poet, he was second in popularity to Byron alone. Byron's boyish

attack upon him in the "English Bards" had been long forgotten, forgiveness it had never needed from the exquisite sweetness of Scott's temper, who had laughed, praised the writer's power, and added only, "spleen and gall are disastrous materials to work with for any length of time." These two great men now met, each with equal esteem for the gifts of the other, and Scott sought Byron's friendship with that alacrity of warm admiration for force of mind and character which marks him through life, and is one of the surest signs of genius. Soon after came the final "Hundred Days" of Napoleon, Scott was among the first to visit the scenes of the campaign, and he found at Paris,—then a city representative of everything except France,—a renewal of his English popularity from the politicians and soldiers of the "allied armies." Some animated letters, and an Ode on Waterloo (not equal to the occasion), were the fruit of this journey. Now followed several years of a splendid, and, on the whole, a singularly well-enjoyed prosperity. "What series," says Mr Carlyle, "followed out of *Waverley*, and how and with what result, is known to all men, was witnessed and watched with a kind of rapt astonishment by all. Walter Scott became Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, of Abbotsford (1820), on whom Fortune seemed to pour her whole cornucopia of wealth, honour, and worldly good, the favourite of Princes and of Peasants, and all intermediate men." That there was another and a more poetical side to the "wealth and worldly good" in Scott's mind has been already noticed, Abbotsford, with its relics and historical territory, its visitors from all lands, including many of the best of his contemporaries, its happy life among friends of equal age, and children fast growing up to be friends (two sons and two daughters), and healthy pleasures in forest and moor, and now at last, full enjoyment of the creative power, "the vision and the faculty divine,"—was a realized romance to Scott, the past living again in the present, common existence enriched and beautified by poetry. Mr Lockhart here gives several pleasing and brilliant pictures of his father-in-law's life in town and country; a day at Abbotsford and a dinner at Ballantyne's are hardly inferior to scenes in the "Antiquary" or "Rob Roy" in vividness.

These descriptions would suffer by abridgment, in place of them, let us try and form some image of the man. The first impression seems to have been that of a stalwart Liddesdale farmer, shrewd and quiet; the figure of good height, the forehead lofty, though not to the exaggerated measure of the bust; complexion ruddy, features massive, and inclining to heaviness. When he spoke, this rather manimate air kindled into brilliant life in his eye and mouth, equally capable of expressing humour or pathos, and produced a greater effect by the force of contrast. The mutability of his features is noted throughout his life, and must have tried beyond their powers the artists who attempted his portrait. Whether through the early fever and its lameness, or some excess in field-sports and genial living, or the corrosion of a mind that never left him at leisure to "do nothing," or through all causes combined, when little over fifty he had already the look of a

"gallant old gentleman," and the sense of premature old age is written on every leaf of his later journals. "I think I shall not live to the usual verge of human existence; I shall never see the threescore and ten." Yet Scott preserves the spirit of his youth, and to the last was characteristically unwilling to allow himself beaten, even in climbing a slope without assistance. In these external details one reads the man; Scott, with his many contrivances and entitles of disposition, was eminently simple "all of a piece." This harmony of nature was not less shown in his conversation, which left the sense of quiet power, inexhaustible variety of anecdote, study of human character, and wealth of the well-voiced memory, rather than of brilliancy. "He did not affect sayings, the points and enterhows of terms, which are easily caught up, were not natural to him. The great charm of his table talk was in the sweetness and *affinity* with which it flowed, always guided by good sense and taste; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described." Abbotsford was a centre of life and society in its brightest, most enjoyable, and most cultivated form, unique in England, and which unhappily has never found a rival. No house, except it were Voltaire's at Ferney, is reputed to have been equally thronged. Scott's hospitality and kindness were unlimited, he had the open nature which is the most charming of all charms; was wholly free from the folly of fastidiousness, had real dignity, and hence never "stood upon it," talked to all he met, and lived as friend with friend among his servants and followers. "Sir Walter speaks to every man," one of them said, "as if they were blood relations." Let us complete the picture in his own words; they give us the two contrasting sides of his character. "Few men have enjoyed society more, or been *bores*, as it is called, less, by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one, out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to wishing for visitors"—Need it be added that he was fond of the company of youth, and delighted as a mother in his children's presence? The letters to his eldest son's young wife are the most attractive and graceful in the series.

Our sketch, inevitably incomplete, must not be concluded without some note of Scott's taste and feeling towards literature. This, says Mr. Lockhart, "engrossed the greater part of his interest and reflection." Beside his original works, and the voluminous editions of Swift and Dryden, Scott edited or superintended as many reprints as would have made the same of an ordinary antiquarian. His own taste evidently led him by preference to our older poets. With Shakespeare his novels show a close familiarity. Scott's admiration for Dryden is expressed in the Life prefixed to his edition; that which he felt for Johnson's two "Satires" was little inferior. He deplores, in mature life, his ignorance of the Greek literature; of the Latin he had no intimate knowledge; nor does his early interest in Goethe, "my old master,"



appear to have been followed by the appreciation of those works compared with which "Goetz" was but crude and feeble. Dante, who represents rather the Roman than the Gothic mediævalism, he did not admire, finding him "obscure and difficult," and remaining even seemingly ignorant till the year of his death that his own ancestor, Michael Scott, had found a place far down in Hell, where he is lodged by Dante in company of Amphitruus, Teiresias, and other reputed sorcerers. In obedience not only to his own taste, but to a traditional fame now greatly faded, Scott was in the habit of reading through the "Orlando" of Ariosto yearly. The judgments preserved on modern English poetry are few and uncritical. In an undated conversation he spoke of himself and of Campbell as much inferior to Burns; and ranked Miss Joanna Baillie far above each. He even couples her with Shakespeare in one of the "Introductions" to *Marmion*. But Scott's impressions fluctuated. Thus he knew no man (1820) "more to be venerated" than Wordsworth for "loftiness of genius"; again, he "always reckoned Burns and Byron the most genuine poetical geniuses of my time, and half a century before me" (1826)—an opinion founded on that predominance of the impulsive character in them, which was the inspiration of his own poetry. On the other hand, Scott more than once expresses deep admiration for Miss Austen, the most unlike himself in style, if second only to him in genius, among all the novelists of the time. "This young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with."

After "*Ivanhoe*," published 1819, the sale of Scott's novels in some degree declined—a fact of which his partners in commerce never informed him. To this reticence, ultimately as unwise for themselves as for him, the negligences which grew upon Scott as a writer may be partly due. But to all eyes he increased in fame and wealth; was caressed and courted as kings have seldom been, but without any taint to the simplicity and beauty of his nature; and reached perhaps the height of his visible popularity with his fellow-creatures on his triumphal progress through Ireland in 1825.—This was a year dark with panic and commercial ruin, Scott's firm, which had been always insecure and carelessly conducted, soon felt the shock. The poet, perhaps the least unbusinesslike member of the house, must have gradually withdrawn from active superintendence, and the clearest knowledge he ever obtained of his own affairs was when his bankruptcy, early in 1826, had been declared. The trying circumstances of the time stood for much in this failure, and Scott might have accepted it without discredit; but the shock roused all the determination in one of the most determined of men, and he resolved to pay the debt in full, and save by his own single-handed exertions what might be saved of his beloved Abbotsford for his family. "Scott's heart clung to the place he had created. *There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me*." His creditors consented; and the "*Life of Napoleon*," with the last volumes of the "*Waverley*" series, were among the results of this decision.

Hitherto something had been left to complete Scott's character. He had still to prove his complete fidelity to his vocation in literature. He had to give the far more anxious proof that he could bear evil fortune in exchange for unusual good. We cannot close the date of our own trials. Scott's came upon him, not as with new terrors of genius, at their first experience of life, during the strength of youth, but after years of romantic success, and when the approaches of mortal disease had already enfeebled the powers of endurance. In the eye of the world,—perhaps in the eye of the philosopher,—it might have been the wiser part to let things take their course, submit, and decline a struggle of no doubtful issue to his own health and life. But, if there was present a true picture, all this was simply impossible to Scott. It would have been to break with what lay deeper and broader in him,—the nature of the poet. Accepting then his decision as that which alone he could adopt, the record of the later years, as told by Mr. Lockhart, and illustrated by Scott's journal, gives to his character the completeness of poetical unity. It is the fifth act in the drama of his life; it displays how the hero met the catastrophe, and overcame it, and rested at last from his labours. The words of an aged uncle, who did not live to see the evil day, were never more completely borne out than now: "God bless thee, Walter, my man! Thou has' nane to be great, but thou wast always great!" It must have been with no little effort that he reappeared in the capital of which he had for many years been beyond comparison the most distinguished inhabitant. "I went to the Court for the first time to day," Jan. 24, 1826, "and, like the man with the large nose, thought everybody was thinking of me and my mishaps. Most were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly; some obviously affected." Though deeply moved by the sympathy shown with him, he did not hold up his head until some pamphlets which he published upon a Scottish commercial question had succeeded. Then he writes, "People will not dare talk of me as an object of pity;—no more *for manning*." But adversity now came in no measured proportions; the cup was filled, and ran over. Poverty was not the only or the worst evil of the year. One son was absent in the army, the second for his education, the care of a sickly and much loved grandchild detained the eldest daughter; and Scott, leaving his wife ill beyond hope at Abbotsford, was compelled to set himself to solitary labour within a narrow lodging at Edinburgh. Soon a few pages in his journal, fearful in the pathetic struggle which they betray, tell us of the irremediable loss. Yet throughout the whole Scott maintains that noble and submissive courage with which, years before the time of calamity, he had looked forward to the unseen future; whatever pain or misfortune might be in store, "I am already a sufficient debtor to the bounty of Providence to be resigned to it."

This resignation bore its fruits: and a kind of after summer of mild and peaceful radiance,—cheered by the fidelity of friends and the love of children, relieves the bodily infirmities and painful task-work of Scott's old age. At this time occurred

in interchange of interesting letters between him and Goethe. Scott gives a characteristic sketch of his own position. "My eldest son has a troop of Hussars, my youngest has just been made Bachelor of Arts at Oxford. God having been pleased to deprive me of their mother, my youngest daughter keeps my household in order, my eldest being married," to Mr. Lockhart, "and having a family of her own. Such are the domestic circumstances of the person you so kindly enquired after for the rest, I have enough to live on in the way I like, notwithstanding some very heavy losses. and I have a stately antique chateau (modern antique), to which any friend of Baron von Goethe will be at all times most welcome, with an entrance-hall filled with armour, which might have become Jaxthausen," the castle in Goethe's *Goetz*, "itself, and a gigantic bloodhound to guard the entrance."

After a visit to London, where he was received by the best men of the time with affectionate respect, and a short excursion to Paris, he completed the "Life of Napoleon" in 1827. A crowd of other volumes followed this massive work, amongst which the "Letters on Chronology and Witchcraft" (1830), written under the pressure of imminent illness, are only sufficient to give an idea how that curious subject, for which he had made large preparations, would have been treated by Scott in his better days. There was much in him of Michael Scott, the magician, much also of Reginald Scott, the courageous advocate of reason and humanity in a superstitious age. Half shrewdness, half or more than half belief,—the poise of his mind between the romantic and the critical, eminently fitted him to write impressively on witchcraft and ghostly legends. Perhaps no single point is managed with more supreme skill in the "Novels." Let us add that, beside all these labours, his warm liberality of heart led him to give others freely that assistance with his pen which his purse could no longer supply. Already he had cleared off a vast load of debt, when Nature, on whom, between physical and mental exertion, he had pressed hard since youth, avenged herself by serious strokes of paralysis in 1830 and 1831. "Such a shaking hands with Death," he said, "is formidable." Scott resigned his legal office, but it was in vain that those about him tried to enforce the quiet of mind which was essential to *Euthanasia*, if not to life. No longer master of the creative imagination, the power which had long obeyed his bidding now compelled him as a slave; and do what his friends could to restrain him, more than one of the novels was produced within these months of decay. At length he was persuaded to try the southern climate. A final gleam of the Scott of younger years broke forth for one moment when Wordsworth came (Sept. 22, 1831) to bid him farewell. For the last time the two great poets who, while following the different paths which led both to masterworks, appreciated each other with the deep sympathy of genius, together traversed the vale of Yarrow. This day was commemorated by Wordsworth in one of the finest occasional poems in our language. A serene beauty characterizes the *Yarrow Revisited*. Perhaps Words-

THE  
LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL:

A POEM

IN SEA CANZONS

*Duror a' d'aga, e'as'p'ore f'ulea; e'ua f'ho'ma ce'nay,  
Me p'ay a, f'u f'ua, p'udae, d'ya'z lu'z*

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

*The Poem now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorises the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.*

*For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied in the action is Three Nights and Three Days.*

## THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

A PECULIAR interest attaches to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," not only as the first disclosure of the poet's powers, but as that, among all his works, which is perhaps most closely identified with his personal career and character. Even if Scott had not himself told us, it would not be difficult to trace the various influences under which he composed this poem. His grandmothers, in whose youth the Border raids were still matters of comparatively recent tradition, used to amuse him with many a tale of Wart of Harden, Wight Willie of Arkwood, Jamie Telfer of the fur Dothard, and other Mosstrooping heroes. This prepared his mind for the deep impression which was made on it, when he was about twelve years old, by Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." It was under a large platanus tree in his aunt's garden at Kelso that he first read them, forgetting even the dinner he sat in his enjoyment of this new treasure. "To read and to remember was in this instance," he says, "the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would listen to me, with tropical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm."

In the compilation of his own Border Minstrelsy he followed the impulse thus derived; and when, after having for some years dabbled in poetry, he aspired to distinguish himself by something higher than mere translations or occasional verses, his partiality for the Border legends governed his choice of a subject as well as the style of treatment. He hesitated for a while as to the particular story he should illustrate, but all that he thought of belonged to the same class. At one time he contemplated "a Border ballad, in the comic manner," founded on his ancestor's (Sir William Scott, of Harden) marriage with ugly Meg Murray, as the alternative of being hanged to his father-in-law. But finally he decided on "a romance of Border chivalry, in a light-horseman sort of stanza." Having, at the request of the Countess of Dulluth, undertaken a ballad about the adventures of a brownie or goblin, called Gilpin Homer, he was discouraged in the attempt by the apparent coldness with which his two friends, Finslie and Cranstoun, listened to the first stanzas, and abandoned the idea till tempted to resume it by learning that, on second thought, his critics had formed a more favourable opinion of the effort. He applied himself to the work as an amusement during his enforced leisure, when disabled by the lack of a horse at ycomany drill on Portobello Sands. As soon as he got into the vein, he dashed it off at the rate of about a canto a week. The goblin page sank into a mere minor feature as the poem grew upon his hands. The metre was borrowed from Coleridge's "Lady Christabel." The beautiful freedom and variety of this metre Scott appreciated all the more, because it enabled him to introduce much of the style and phrasology of the old minstrels. The ballad measure in quatrains, which

at first naturally suggested itself, was set aside as too hackneyed and wearisome for a composition of any length. Against the measured short line, or octo-syllabic verse, there was the objection of the "fatal faculty," to use Scott's own phrase, with which it was written, the temptation it offered to mere verbiage, and its monotonous and namby-pamby effect. Shakespeare had laughed at it as the "butter-woman's rate to market," and the "very false gallop of verses," and Scott felt that his muse demanded a more stirring and varied measure. "Christabel" was not published till 1816, but a year or two before Scott began the "Lay" he had heard Sir John Stoddart recite some parts of it, which made a deep impression on his mind. He saw that Coleridge had remedied all the defects of the octo-syllabic measure, by freeing it from its rigid formality, and dividing it by time instead of syllables; by the beat of four, as Leigh Hunt remarks, into which you might get as many syllables as you could, instead of allotting eight syllables to the poor time, whatever it might have to say, varying it further with alternate rhymes and stanzas, with rests and omissions, precisely analogous to those in music. The old bard himself was an afterthought. He was introduced as a sort of "pitch-pipe" to indicate the tone and character of the composition.

In the poem the reader will find a romantic picture of the Borderers, in the best aspect of their character. Their name, like that of the kindred rovers of the sea, is "linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes." Scott has brought out the solitary virtue—dauntless bravery—into the foreground, and has thrown the crimes into the shade. Here we may offer some prosaic observations on their real character. At first national feuds lent a justification to the Border raids. It was in the spirit of patriotism that the men on each side of the Cheviots harried one another's homes, and drove off one another's cattle. The instinct of hostility survived long after the two countries were at peace, and was quickened by the love of plunder. At the period of the following tale, they had degenerated into mere robbers, whom the rulers on both sides of the Border alike denounced. The best that can be said for them is that they had inherited the traditions of rapine which they sought to perpetuate, that what philosophers now call the doctrine of "continuity" was responsible for much of their wild temper; and that the savage habits which had been transmitted through generations were not readily uprooted.—

"There never was a time on the March partes,  
Saw the Douglas and the Percy met,  
But 't was marvell 't the redde blude roun not  
As the rune does in the street."

Nursed with such a lullaby, it seemed to these wild Borderers only a law of nature that Scots and English should prey upon each other, and this ferocious spirit soon expanded into an impartial appetite for plunder, and general antagonism to society. And so it came about that a Scott learned to have as little compunction in "lighting to bed" a Kerr as a Græme. They had their own domestic raids and blood-feuds or disputes, as over the Border. It was, in truth, a restless, cruel, wild-berst kind of existence, that called forth all the worst passions, and could have been bearable only through a brutish insensibility and indifference to danger. They carried their life in their hands, and none could tell whether to a week's end he could call his line his own. "They are like to Job," says Fuller, quaintly, "not in piety and patience, but in sudden plenty and poverty, sometimes having flocks and herds in the morning, none at night, and perchance many again next day." It was with some surprise, in the midst of vexation, that Watt Tinninn reflected that his little lonely tower had not been





The wildness of the region, even at the end of the last century, may be gathered from the incidents of one of the poet's rudes. His gig was the first wheeled carriage that had ever been seen in Liddesdale. There was no inn or public-house of any kind in the whole valley, which was accessible only through a succession of tremendous morasses. "In the course of our grand tour, besides the risks of swamping and breaking our necks, we encountered the formidable hardships of sleeping upon pert-sticks, and eating mutton slain by no common butcher, but deprived of life by the judgment of God, as a coroner's inquest would express themselves." Scott used to boast of being sheriff of the "cairn and the scaur," and that he had strolled through the wild glens of Liddesdale "so often and so long, that he might say he had a home in every farmhouse."

The scenery of the Scottish borderland can lay claim to little grandeur. The hills are too bare to be beautiful, and too low to be very impressive. Still the wide tracts of black moss, the grey swells of moor rising into brown, round-backed hills, with here and there a stately cliff of sterner aspect, and the green pastures of the quiet glens, are not without their charm, in spite of the general bare and treeless character of the landscape, which is at first apt to disappoint the visitor from the South. Washington Irving spoke of this disappointment to his host at Abbotsford. "Scott hummed for a moment to himself, and looked grave. 'It may be pertinacity,' he said at length; 'but to my eye, these grey hills and all this wild Border country have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land, it has something bold, stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest grey hills, and if I did not see the heather at least once a year, *I think I should die!*'" The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied by a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that showed his heart was in his speech." That Scott was quite sensible to the sort of melancholy awe inspired by some of the more savage parts of the country is shown (if other proof were not abundant in his poems and novels) in a passage in one of his letters. Speaking of the view from the top of Minchmoor, he says—"I assure you I have felt really oppressed with a sort of fearful loneliness when looking around the naked towering ridges of desolate barrenness which is all the eye takes in from the top of such a mountain, the patches of cultivation being hidden in the little glens, or only appearing to make one feel how feeble and ineffectual man has been to contend with the genius of the soil. It is in such a scene that the unknown and gifted author of 'Albion' places the superstition which consists in hearing the noise of a 'chase, the baying of the hounds, the throttling sobs of the deer, the wild halloos of the huntsmen, and the

"'Hoof thick beating on the hollow hill'

I have often repeated his verses with some sensations of awe in this place." As far as his own estate was concerned, he did much by his plantations to cover the nakedness of the land, and his precept and example also helped to make planting fashionable among his neighbours.

Of Scott's power of word-painting there is, no doubt, more abundant and striking evidence in his later poems; but the descriptions of natural scenery in the "Lay" are not only very effective, but illustrate that peculiar perception of colour rather than form which has been pointed out in the very suggestive criticism of Mr. Ruskin in the "Modern Painters." Analysing the description of Edinburgh, in "Marmion," he shows there is hardly any form, only smoke and colour in the picture. "Observe," he says, "the only hints at form given throughout are in

the colour but vague words, 'red, grey, blue, and gold,' the whole being still more obscured by rich mystic, in its most tangible form of smoke. But the colours are all definite—note the rainbow band of them—pale, or dusky red, sable, or rich blue, smoky, or pure purple—green and gold—in a noble chord throughout." Then, says Mr. Rodd, says, "In consequence of his unsatisfactory poet I know. All the rest is by their ears to her, and begin trampling in her ears about their own affairs. But with Scott the love is entirely humble and unselfish. 'I, Scott, am nothing, and less than nothing: but these crags, and heath, and clouds, how great are they, how lovely, how for ever to be beloved, only for the man who the world's sake!'"

Without attempting any detailed topographical illustration of the poem, it may be worth while to notice some of the spots of chief interest which are referred to. Newark Castle, where the old minstrel is supposed to cradled his tale before the duchess, stands in ruins, in its "broken tower" on the right bank of the Yarrow—a huge square tower, dismantled and unroofed, with crumbling outer wall and murets. It was built by James II for a hunting seat, afterwards belonged to the outlaw Murray, and has long been a possession, as it still is, of the house of Buccleuch. Newnham Castle, where the imaginary minstrel poured forth his song, is included within the grounds of Bowhill, the favourite seat of another fair duchess, at whose request, when Countess of Dalkeith, Scott commenced the poem which developed into the Lay. He accordingly, says Lockhart, "shadowed out his own beautiful friend in the person of her lord's ancestor, the last of the original stock of that great house; himself, the favoured inmate of Bowhill, introduced certainly to the familiarity of that circle by his devotion to the poetry of a by-gone age, in that of an aged minstrel seeking shelter at the gate of Newark." This is the point of many rich allusions in the poem. There is also a personal interest in the closing lines, which refer, it is believed, to the day-dream of Ashiestiel—the purchase of a modest mountain farm in that neighbourhood: "a hundred acres, two spare bed rooms, with dressing-rooms, each of which will on a pinch have a couch-bed"—a dream which afterwards grew into the ambitious scheme of Abbotsford. Lockhart deems it, in one point of view, the greatest misfortune of Scott's life that the original vision was not realized, but "the success of the poem itself 'changed the spirit of his dream.'" Ashiestiel, where the Lay was partly written, lies at the foot of Minchmoor, on the right bank of the Tweed.

Branksome Tower still overlooks the Langholm Road, on the left bank of the Teviot, between two and three miles above Hawick. Various alterations have gradually reduced the dimensions of the building, and one square tower of massive thickness is the only part of the original structure which now remains. In the rest of the edifice the castellated style has been abandoned, and the old stronghold presents, with the exception of the towers referred to, the appearance of a handsome modern mansion. The extent of the old castle can still, however, be traced by some vestiges of its foundation. Its situation on a steep bank, surrounded by the Teviot, and flanked by a deep ravine, naturally added to its strength. The present hunting seat of the Duke of Buccleuch in this quarter is at Langholm Lodge. Branksome is celebrated in a song of Alan Ramsay's—

"As I cam' in by Teviot-side,"

as well as in the Lay. About half a mile nearer Hawick, on the other bank of the river from Branksome, is the peel of Goldielands, in tolerably good preservation.

Harden Castle, another relic of the same period, and the cradle of the poet's ancestry, stands not far off on the bank of Borthwick Water, which here joins

the Teviot It takes its name from the number of hares which used to frequent the place (Harden—the ravine of hares), and is a deep, dark, narrow glen, threaded by a little mountain streamlet The castle is perched on the top of the steep bank, and Leyden (Scott's friend), in one of his poems, thus describes the situation —

"Where Bortha hoarse, that loads the meads with sand,  
Rolls ner red tide to Teviot's western strand,  
Through slaty hills, whose sides are shogged with thorn,  
Where springs in scattered tufts the dark green corn,  
Towers wood girt Harden far above the vale,  
And clouds of ravens o'er the turrets sail"

The family of Harden is a cadet branch of the house of Buccleuch, and the heraldic allusion in the poem is to the fact that the Scotts of Harden bear their arms upon the field, while the Scotts of Buccleuch exhibit them on the bend dexter, which they adopted when the estate of Murdiestone came by marriage One of the most famous of the Scotts of Harden was one Walter, who flourished during the reign of Queen Mary He was a great freebooter, and used to bring his spoil to the castle on the cliff His wife was Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow (one of the Scotts of Dryhope), and it is of her the well known story is told of the production of a pair of clean spurs at dinner-time, in a covered dish, as a hint of the want of provisions, and of the way to get them Notwithstanding his marauding life Walter seems to have prospered He had a large estate, which was divided among his five sons A number of the most popular of the Border songs are attributed by tradition to an infant whom he carried off in a raid, and whom his kind-hearted wife cherished as one of her own children As illustrative of the temper of this rough old chief, Sir Walter tells a characteristic anecdote in one of the notes of the Minstrelsy. "Upon one occasion, when the village herd was driving out the cattle to pasture, the old laird heard him call loudly to drive out Harden's cow 'Harden's cow' echoed the affronted chief, 'is it come to that pass? By my faith, they shall soon say Harden's kye' (cows) Accordingly he sounded his bugle, set out with his followers, and next day returned with a *bow of kye and a lasser'd (brindled) bull* On his return with this gallant prey, he passed a very large haystack It occurred to the provident laird that this would be extremely convenient to fodder his new stock of cattle, but, as no means of transporting it were obvious, he was fain to take leave of it with the apostrophe, now become proverbial, 'By my saul, had ye but four feet, ye should not stand lang there' In short, as Froissart says of a similar class of feudal robbers, nothing came amiss to them that was not *too heavy or too hot*" It was Auld Wat's eldest son, Sir William Scott, who was saved from being hanged for participation in a foray on the lands of Sir Gibson Murray, of Elbank, by the captor's prudent wife suggesting that it was a pity to sacrifice a young man of good estate when they might marry him to one of their three daughters, a proposal to which it did not, under the circumstances, require much argument to reconcile young Harden Beardie (so called from the long beard he wore in mourning for the execution of Charles I.), the poet's great-grandfather, was the grandson of Sir William Scott

Hawick spreads itself on both sides of the Slitterick, a tributary of the Teviot, into which it falls just below the town Having survived repeated burnings during the heat of Border warfare, part of the Tower-inn represents, it is said, the only building which was not consumed in the great blaze of 1570 Hawick is now at the head of the "tweed" manufactories of Scotland It has a rapidly growing population, already over 8,000, and is continually being enriched with new mills Minto Castle, the seat of the Earl of Minto—open daily except Sunday—perched on a height, between Hawick and Selkirk, commands a fine

view, and a note I for its magnificent library. Minto Crag, close at hand, are a romantic series of cliffs rising suddenly above the Vale of Teviot. A small platform on a projecting crag is known as Parvill's Ped, from a famous outlaw and robber who lived in a strait passage beneath the rocks, of which there are some vestiges, as well as of another old ped on the summit of the height. Of Melrose a sufficient account is given in the poem and note. Rodkin is very angry with Scott, because, avenging it as he did, "he set east one of its piers, puts a modern steel grate into it, and makes it his fire-place." Founded in 1136, by David I. (whose liberality in endowing churches brings from his successor the morn that he was "a sore curst for the crown"), the abbey was finished ten years later, and was peopled with monks from Yorkshire, who, although of the reformed order, called Cistercians—the first of the class seen north of the Tweed—appear soon to have degenerated into the traditional monkish sensuality, if we may trust the jeering verse—

"The monks of Melrose first began  
On the high walls of the fast  
Not to dwell the idle life,  
As long as their bellows last."

The abbey was destroyed by the English in 1532, rebuilt by Robert Bruce, cruelly defaced at the Reformation, but still remains one of the noblest and most interesting specimens of Gothic sculpture and architecture in Scotland. The stone of which it is built, though exposed to the weather for so many ages, retains perfect sharpness, so that even the most minute ornaments seem as entire as when newly wrought. The Abbey is the theme of a poem by Arthur Hallam, who dwells especially on its resistance to decay, and covers a similar tardy waning, till looking on the serene, thoughtful figure of the bard of Abbotsford, he

—"Know'st thou a wreath of sweet  
With power, upon the ways of fate,  
And works the joy, the peace and gladness  
That constrains of old chivalry,  
In the cold grave must once be true,  
But his transmuteth thoughts have part  
In the collective mind, and never shall die."

Although Abbotsford has a greater attraction for the traveller than any other spot in the district—not even, perhaps, excepting Melrose itself—it is apt to be a disappointment. It is a very indifferent building, in an architectural point of view; defective in taste and poor in effect. It wants elevation, and, above all, repose, the eye is vexed by the compound medley of style, and by the restless pretentious effect to cram a vast deal into a limited space. Most of the pictures help to encourage an exaggerated idea of the imposing aspect of the mansion, and when the stranger sees the reality it falls far short of his expectations. For its own sake it would not be worth the while of turning out of one's road to look at it. To the associations connected with it alone, is due the interest of the place. It should be visited in the spirit of a pilgrimage, and to those who know the sad, romantic story of its creation and consequences, there is a touching interest in every relic and every chamber. How the dream about the cottage expanded into the ambition of a castle is well known, as well as its disastrous end, the crushing load of debt, the desperate struggle to redeem it, the overstrained and shattered mind. Between the Clarty Hole when Scott first furnished it—"the naked moor, a few turnip fields, painfully reclaimed from it, a Scotch cottage and farm-yard, and some Scotch firs"—and the richly wooded domain, with its turreted chambers, into which it was gradually converted, there was a wide contrast. Whatever may be thought of the house, the surrounding plantations were a noble work, and justify the poet's

enthusiasm for the work. A public road divides the mansion and *pleasance* from the main body of the park and wood. The house stands near the edge of the wooded bank, sloping down towards the Tweed. A pious pride has been taken in preserving the whole building as it was in Scott's time. The armour and weapons of all kinds are all in their old array; the same pictures hang on the walls, the books are ranged in the order familiar to the master's hand, and even the lounging-coat, the hat, walking-shoes, and staff are ready in their places. Passing through a porch, you enter the hall, which, with its stained glass, trophies of armour, blazonry of Border heroes, "who kept the marchys of Scotland in the auld time for the kinge," and lozenge pavement of black and white marble, is the finest part of the house. A narrow, low-arched room, running quite across the building, and filled with more armour and other curiosities, leads to the drawing-room on one side, and the dining-room on the other. The latter is a handsome chamber, with a low, richly-carved roof of dark oak, spacious bow-window, and numerous valuable and interesting pictures, such as the head of Mary Queen of Scots in a charger, painted by Amias Cawood the day after her decapitation; portraits of old "Beardie," Lucy Walters, the Duchess of Buccleuch, to whom the Minstrel is supposed to chant his Lay, &c. The drawing room is panelled with cedar, and fitted with antique ebony furniture, quaint, richly carved cabinets and precious china ware. In a pleasant breakfast-room, overlooking the river, there are some good pictures by Turner, Thomson of Duddingstone, and others. The library is the largest room of the house. Some 70,000 vols crowd its shelves. From this opens Sir Walter's private study—a snug little chamber, with no furniture, except a small writing-table, a plain arm-chair, covered with black leather, and another smaller chair—clearly indicating it as a place for work, not company. There are a few books on each side of the fire-place, and a sort of supplemental library in a gallery which runs round three sides of the room. In a closet are preserved, under a glass case, the clothes Sir Walter wore just before his death—a broad-skirted green coat, with large buttons, plaid trousers, heavy shoes, broad-brimmed hat, and stout walking-stick. The relics set one thinking of the old man's last days in the house of which he was so proud, the kindly placid figure wheeled about, with all the dogs round him, in a chair, up and down the hall and library, saying, "Ah, I've seen much, but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more." Much of the decoration of the house is of ancient design, some borrowed from Melrose, some from Dumfermline, Linlithgow, and Roslin. Even portions of various old edifices are worked into the building. Within the estate is the scene of the last great clan battle of the Borders, that fought in 1526 between the Earls of Angus and Home, backed the former by the Kerrs, and the other by Buccleuch. Mr Hope Scott, Q.C. who married Scott's granddaughter, has inherited the property.

The success of the Lay was beyond the most sanguine expectations of Scott's most enthusiastic admirers. In the preface of 1830, he himself estimated the sale at upwards of 30,000 copies, but Lockhart tells us that this was an underestimate, and that in twenty-five years no fewer than 44,000 copies had been disposed of—an event with few parallels in the history of British poetry. The first edition, a magnificent quarto, of which 750 copies were printed, was quickly exhausted, eleven octavo editions, a small quarto, and a foolscap edition followed in rapid succession.

# THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

## INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was  
cold,

The Minstrel was infirm and old;  
His father'd cold, and tremor'd grey,  
Seem'd to have known a better day,  
The harp, his sole remaining joy,  
Was carried by an orphan boy.  
The last of all the Bards was he,  
Who sung of Border chivalry;  
For, welladay! their date was fled,  
His useful brethren all were dead,  
And he, neglected and oppress'd  
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.  
No more on prancing palfrey borne,  
He exult'd, light as lark at morn,  
No longer courted and caress'd,  
High plac'd in hall, a welcome guest,  
He pour'd, to lord and lady pay,  
The unpremeditated lay:  
Old times were changed, old manners  
gone.

A stranger fill'd the Stuart's throne;  
The bigot, of the iron time  
Had call'd his harmless art a crime  
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,  
He begg'd his bread from door to door,  
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,  
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately  
tower

Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower.  
The Minstrel gaz'd with wishful eye—  
No humbler resting place was nigh  
With hesitating step at last,  
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,  
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar  
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,  
But never closed the iron door  
Against the desolate and poor.

The Duchess\* mark'd his weary pace,  
His timid step, and reverend face,  
And bade her page the menials tell,  
That they should tend the old man well  
For she had known adversity,  
Though born in such a high degree,  
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,  
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody  
tomb!

When address'd his wants supplied,  
And the old man was gratified,  
Began to rise his minstrel pride;  
And he began to talk anon,  
Of good Earl Francis, † dead and gone,  
And of Earl Walter, ‡ rest him, God!  
A braver ne'er to battle rode;  
And how full many a tale he knew,  
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:  
And, would the noble Duchess deign  
To listen to an old man's strain,  
Though stiff his hand, his voice though  
weak,

He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,  
That, if she loved the harp to hear,  
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;  
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.  
But, when he reach'd the room of state,  
Where she, with all her ladies, sat,  
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:  
For, when to tune his harp he tried,

\* Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient Lords of Buccleuch and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

† Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess.

‡ Walter Esdaile of Buccleuch grandfather of the Duchess and a celebrated warrior.

His trembling hand had lost the ease,  
Which marks security to please,  
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,  
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—  
He tried to tune his harp in vain!  
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,  
And gave him heart, and gave him time,  
Till every string's according glee  
Was blended into harmony  
And then, he said, he would full fain  
He could recall an ancient strain,  
He never thought to sing again  
It was not framed for village churls,  
But for high dames and mighty earls,  
He had play'd it to King Charles the  
good,  
When he kept court in Holyrood;  
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try

The long-forgotten melody  
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,  
And an uncertain warbling made,  
And oft he shook his hoary head  
But when he caught the measure wild,  
The old man raised his face, and smiled;  
And lighten'd up his faded eye,  
With all a poet's ecstasy!  
In varying cadence, soft or strong,  
He swept the sounding chords along:  
The present scene, the future lot,  
His toils, his wants, were all forgot.  
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,  
In the full tide of song were lost;  
Each blank, in faithless memory void,  
The poet's glowing thought supplied  
And, while his harp responsive rung,  
'T was thus the LASTEST MINSTREL sung.

## CANTO FIRST.

## I

THE feast was over in Branksome  
tower.\*  
And the Ladye had gone to her secret  
bower,  
Her bower that was guarded by word  
and by spell,  
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—  
Jesu Maria, shield us well!  
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,  
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

## II

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse  
all;  
Knight, and page, and household  
squire,  
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,  
Or crowded round the ample fire  
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,  
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,  
And urged, in dreams, the forest-race,  
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor

\* See "NOTES TO THE 'LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL'" in the Appendix

## III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame  
Hung their shields in Branksome  
Hall,  
Nine-and-twenty squires of name  
Brought them their steeds to bower  
from stall;  
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall  
Waited, duteous, on them all  
They were all knights of metal  
true,  
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch

## IV

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,  
With belted sword, and spur on heel  
They quitted not their harness bright,  
Neither by day nor yet by night  
They lay down to rest,  
With corslet laced,  
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard,  
They car'd at the meal  
With gloves of steel,  
And they drank the red wine through  
The helmet barr'd

## V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,  
 Watched the beech of the wardens tree,  
 Thirty steeds, both fleet and swift,  
 Strode for ill or good day and night,  
 Buried and buried of steel, I row,  
 And with Jedwood axes and the bow,  
 A hundred more fed free in stall—  
 Such was the store of Brinkcome Hall.

## VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?  
 Why watch the warriors, armed, by  
 night?—  
 They watch, to hear the blood-hound  
 baying;  
 They watch, to hear the war-horn  
 baying;  
 To see St. George's red cross streaming,  
 To see the midnight beacon gleaming;  
 They watch, for the Southern force and  
 guide.

Lord Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's  
 powers,  
 Threaten Brinkcome's lordly towers,  
 From Wadworth, or Naworth, or merry  
 Carlisle.

## VII

Such is the custom of Brinkcome Hall—  
 Many a valiant knight is here;  
 But he, the chieftain of them all,  
 His sword hangs rusting on the wall,  
 Beside his broken spear  
 Birds long shall tell,  
 How Lord Walter fell;  
 When startled burghers fled, afar,  
 The fumes of the Border war;  
 When the streets of high Dunedin  
 Saw lances gleam, and falchions  
 redden,  
 And heard the slogan's deadly yell—  
 Then the Chief of Brinkcome fell.

## VIII

Can piety the discord heal,  
 Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?  
 Can Christian love, can patriot zeal,  
 Can love of blessed charity?

\* I do blush  
 † The war cry or gathering word of a Border  
 clan

Not a soul to each holy shrine,  
 In mutual phylmye, they drew;  
 Implored, in vain, the grace divine  
 For chiefs, their own red falchions  
 slew.  
 While Cressford o'ers the rule of Carr,  
 While Fitchet bears the line of Scott,  
 The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,  
 The havoc of the feudal war,  
 Shall never, never be forgot!

## IX

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier  
 The warlike foresters had bent;  
 And many a flower, and many a tear,  
 Old Tervor's maid and matrons lent—  
 But o'er her warrior's bloody bier  
 The Lady dropp'd nor flower nor tear;  
 Vengeance, deep brooding o'er the slain,  
 Had lock'd the source of softer woe;  
 And burning pride, and high disdain,  
 Forbade the rising tear to flow;  
 Until, amid his sorrowing clan,  
 Her son he p'd from the nurse's knee—  
 "And if I live to be a man,  
 My father's death reversed shall be!"  
 Then fast the mother's tears did seek  
 To dew the infant's finding cheek.

## X.

All loose her perihent attire,  
 All loose her golden hair,  
 Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,  
 And wept in wild despair,  
 But not alone the bitter tear  
 Had nigh grief sapp'd,  
 For hopeless love, and anxious fear,  
 Had lent their mingled tide  
 Nor in her mother's alter'd eye  
 Dared she to look for sympathy  
 Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,  
 With Carr in arms had stood,  
 When Mathouse burn'd to Melrose ran  
 All purple with their blood;  
 And well she knew, her mother dread,  
 Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,  
 Would see her on her dying bed.

## XI.

Of noble race the Lady came,  
 Her father was a clerk of fame,



Of Bethune's line of Picardie ·  
 He learned the art that none may name,  
 In Padua, far beyond the sea  
 Men said, he changed his mortal frame,  
 By feat of magic mystery,  
 For when, in studious mood he paced  
 St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,  
 His form no darkening shadow traced  
 Upon the sunny wall'

## XII

And of his skill, as bards avow,  
 He taught that Ladye fair,  
 Till to her bidding she could bow  
 The viewless forms of air  
 And now she sits in secret bower,  
 In old Lord David's western tower,  
 And listens to a heavy sound,  
 That moans the mossy turrets round.  
 Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,  
 That chafes against the scaur's red side?  
 Is it the wind that swings the oaks?  
 Is it the echo from the rocks?  
 What may it be, the heavy sound,  
 That moans old Branksome's turrets  
 round'

## XIII

At the sullen, moaning sound,  
 The ban-dogs bay and howl;  
 And, from the turrets round,  
 Loud whoops the startled owl  
 In the hall, both squire and knight  
 Swore that a storm was near,  
 And looked forth to view the night,  
 But the night was still and clear!

## XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,  
 Chafing with the mountain's side  
 From the groan of the wind-swung oak,  
 From the sullen echo of the rock,  
 From the voice of the coming storm,  
 The Ladye knew it well!  
 It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,  
 And he called on the Spirit of the Fell

## XV.

## RIVER SPIRIT

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

## MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

—"Brother, nay—

On my hills the moonbeams play  
 From Craik-crook to Skelfhull-pen,  
 By every rill, in every glen,  
 Merry elves their morris pacing,  
 To aerial minstrelsy,  
 Emerald rings on brown hearth tracing,  
 Trip it deft and merrily  
 Up, and mark their nimbly feet!  
 Up, and list their music sweet!"—

## XVI

## RIVER SPIRIT.

"Tears of an imprisoned maiden  
 Mix with my polluted stream,  
 Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,  
 Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam  
 Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,  
 When shall cease these feudal jars?  
 What shall be the maiden's fate?  
 Who shall be the maiden's mate?"—

## XVII.

## MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,  
 In utter darkness, round the pole;  
 The Northern Bear lowers black and  
 grim,  
 Orion's studded belt is dim;  
 Twinkling fount, and distant far,  
 Shimmers through mist each planet star,  
 Ill may I read their high decree!  
 But no kind influence deign they shower  
 On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,  
 Till pride be quell'd, and love be free!"

## XVIII

The unearthly voices ceast,  
 And the heavy sound was still;  
 It died on the river's breast,  
 It died on the side of the hill.  
 But round Lord David's tower  
 The sound still floated near,  
 For it rung in the Ladye's bower,  
 And it rung in the Ladye's ear  
 She raised her stately head,  
 And her heart throbb'd high with  
 pride:—  
 "Your mountains shall bend,  
 And your streams ascend,  
 Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

## XIV.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,  
Where every a bold retainer lay,  
And, with proud din among them all,  
Her son pursued his infant play.  
A forced most trooper, the boy  
The treasons of a spear bestowed,  
And to wit the hild right merrily,  
In mimic fory rode.  
E'en bearded fighters, in arms grown  
old,

Share in his frolic gambols bore  
Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,  
Were valiant as the steel they wore  
For the grey wars as prophesied,  
How the brave boy, in future war,  
Should tame the Unicorn's pride  
Ere the Crescent and the Star

## XV.

The Ladye for of her purpose high,  
One moment, and no more,  
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,  
As she paused at the arched door  
Then, from amid the armed train,  
She call'd to her William of Deloraine

## XVI.

A stark, moss-trooping Scott was he,  
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;  
Through Solway sands, through Tarras  
moss,  
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross,  
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,  
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds,  
In Esk or Tiddel, fords were none,  
But he would ride them, one by one;  
Alike to him was time or tide,  
December's snow, or July's pride;  
Alike to him was tide or time,  
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:  
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,  
As ever drove prey from Cumberland.  
Five times outlawed had he been,  
By England's King, and Scotland's  
Queen

## XVII.

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,  
Mount thee on the mightiest steed;

Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,  
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;  
And in Melrose's holy pile  
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.  
Greet the Father well from me,  
Say that the fated hour is come  
And to night he shall watch with thee,  
To win the treasure of the tomb  
For thy will be St. Michael's night,  
And, though stars be dim, the moon is  
bright,  
And the Cross, of blood red,  
Will point to the grave of the mighty  
dead

## XVIII.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep,  
Strive not thou for food or sleep  
Be it scroll, or be it book,  
Intuit, Knight, thou must not look.  
If thou redest, thou art torn!  
Better hadst thou ne'er been born!"--

## XIX.

"O wifely can speed my dapple grey  
steed,  
Which drinks of the Teviot clear,  
Lest break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,  
"Again will I be here  
And faster by none may thy errand be  
done.  
Thou, noble dame, by me,  
Letter nor line know I never a one,  
Wert my neck verse at Hairbutt."

## XX.

Soon in his saddle sat he fast,  
And soon the steep descent he past,  
Soon cross'd the sounding harbican,\*  
And soon the Teviot side he won.  
Eastward the wooded path he rode,  
Green hazels o'er his brisnet nod;  
He pass'd the Peelf of Goldilind,  
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring  
strand;  
Dimly he view'd the Moot-hill's mound,  
Where Druid shades still fitted round;  
In Hawick twinkled many a light,  
Behind him soon they set in night;

\* *Barlucan*, the defence of an outer gate of a feudal castle.

\* *Peelf*, a Border tower.

And soon he spurr'd his courser keen  
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean

## XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchmen  
mark.—

"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark"—  
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight re-  
joind,

And left the friendly tower behind  
He turn'd him now from Teviotside,  
And, guided by the tinkling rill,  
Northward the dark ascent did ride,  
And gained the moor at Horsliehull,  
Broad on the left before him lay,  
For many a mile, the Roman way \*

## XXVII

A moment now he slack'd his speed,  
A moment breathed his panting steed,  
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,  
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand,  
On Minto-crag the moonbeams glint,  
Where Barnhill hew'd his bed of flint,  
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,  
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,  
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye  
For many a league his prey could spy,  
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,  
The terrors of the robber's horn;  
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,  
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,  
When some sad swain shall teach the  
grove,

Ambition is no cure for love!

## XXVIII

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,  
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,

Where Aill, from mountains freed,  
Down from the lakes did raving come,  
Each wave was crested with tan ny foam,  
Like the mane of a chestnut steed  
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,  
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road

## XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,  
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow,  
Above the forming tide, I ween,  
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen,

\* An ancient Roman road, crossing through  
part of Roxburghshire

For he was barded \* from counter to tail,  
And the rider was armed complete in  
mail,

Never heavier man and horse  
Stemm'd a midnight torient's force  
The warrior's very plume, I say,  
Was daggl'd by the dashing spray;  
Yet, through good heart, and Our  
Lady's grace,  
At length he gained the landing place

## XXX

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,  
And sternly shook his plumed head,  
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon, †  
For on his soul the slaughter red  
Of that unhallow'd morn arose,  
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;  
When royal James beheld the fray,  
Prize to the victor of the day,  
When Home and Douglas, in the van,  
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,  
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear  
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear

## XXXI

In bitter mood he spurred fast,  
And soon the hated heath was past.  
And far beneath, in lustre wan,  
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran,  
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,  
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye  
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew  
rung,  
Now midnight huds ‡ were in Melrose  
sung

The sound, upon the fitful gale,  
In solemn wise did rise and fall,  
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone  
Is waken'd by the winds alone  
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas  
silence all,  
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,  
And sought the convent's lonely wall

—  
HERE paused the harp, and with its swell  
The Master's fire and courage fell,

\* Barded, or barbed,—applied to a horse  
recourted with defensive armour

† An ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford,  
now demolished

‡ *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Catholic  
Church

Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd  
And, raving round on the crowd,  
He seem'd to seek, in every eye,  
If they approved his minstrelsy;  
And, dissident of present praise,  
Somewhat he spoke of former days,  
And how, of late, he had sung here,  
He told me his hand and harp some wrong;  
The Duchess and her daughters fair,  
And every gentle lady there,  
Each after each, in due degree,  
Gave praises to his melody.  
He had, 'twas true, his voice wax'd hoarse,  
And much they longed the rest to hear,  
Encouraged thus, the *Armed Man*,  
After meet rest, again began

CANTO SECOND.

I.

If there would stave for Melrose night,  
Go ye up by the pale moonlight;  
For the grey beams of light-some day,  
Gleam, but to float, the ruins grey  
When the broken arches are black in  
night,  
And each hoisted oriel glimmers white;  
When the cold light's uncertain shiver  
Streams on the ruined central tower,  
When buttress and buttress, alternately,  
Seem framed of ebony and ivory;  
When silver edges the imagery,  
And the scroll that teach thee to live  
and die;  
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,  
And the owl to hoot o'er the dead  
man's grave,  
Then go—but go alone the while—  
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;  
And, home returning, soothly swear,  
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

Short halt did Deiorum make there  
Little reck'd he of the scene so far;  
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,  
He struck full loud, and struck full long,  
The porter hurried to the gate—  
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so  
late?"  
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried,  
And strait the wicket open'd wide.

For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle  
stood,

To fence the rights of fair Melrose;  
And lands and living, many a good,  
Had gifted the shrine for their souls'  
repose.

III.

Bell Deiorum his errand said;  
The porter bent his humble head;  
With toren in hand, and feet unshod,  
And noiseless step, the path he trod,  
The arched cloister, far and wide,  
Kang to the warrior's clanking stride,  
Till, stooping low, his lamp he rest,  
He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,  
And hied his bare head as entyle,\*  
To hie the Monk of St. Mary's aisle

IV.

"The Lady of Branksome greets thee  
by me,  
Say, that the fated hour is come,  
And that to-night I shall wench with thee,  
To win the treasure of the tomb"—  
From such cloth couch the monk arose,  
With toil his stiff and limbs he rear'd;  
A hundred years had hung their snows  
On his thin locks and flowing beard

V.

And strangely on the knight look'd he,  
And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and  
wide,  
"And darest thou, Warrior, seek to see  
What heaven and hell alike would  
hide?  
My breast, in belt of iron pent,  
With shirt of hair and scourge of  
thorn;  
For threescore years, in penance spent  
My knees those flinty stones have  
worn;  
Yet all too little to atone  
For knowing what should ne'er be  
known  
Would'st thou thy every future year  
In ceaseless prayer and penance  
drie,  
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—  
Then daring Warrior, follow me!"  
\* *Arctingla*, visor of the helmet

Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's  
 in ul,  
 And kiss'd his waving plume

## XIX

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,  
 As if he had not been dead a day  
 His hoary beard in silver roll'd,  
 He seem'd some seventy winters old,  
 A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,  
 With a wrought Spanish baldric  
 bound,

Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea -  
 His left hand held his Book of Might,  
 A silver cross was in his right;  
 The lamp was placed beside his  
 knee

High and majestic was his look,  
 At which the fellest fiends had shook,  
 And all unruffled was his face  
 They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

## XX.

Often had William of Deloraine  
 Rode through the battle's bloody plain,  
 And trampled down the warriors slain,  
 And neither known remorse nor awe,  
 Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;  
 His breath came thick, his head swam  
 round,

When this strange scene of death he  
 saw

Bewilder'd and unnerv'd he stood,  
 And the priest pray'd fervently and loud  
 With eyes averted prayed he,  
 He might not endure the sight to see,  
 Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

## XXI

And when the priest his death-prayer  
 had pray'd,

Thus unto Deloraine he said -  
 "Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,  
 Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;  
 For those, thou mayst not look upon,  
 Are gathering fast round the yawning  
 stone!"

Then Deloraine, in terror, took  
 From the cold hand the Mighty Book,  
 With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:  
 He thought, as he took it, the dead man  
 frown'd,

But the glare of the sepulchral light,  
 Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's  
 sight.

## XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,  
 The night return'd in double gloom.  
 For the moon had gone down, and the  
 stars were few;

And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,  
 With wavering steps and dizzy brain,  
 They hardly might the postern gain  
 'Tis said, as through the aisles they  
 pass'd,

They heard strange noises on the blast,  
 And through the cloister-galleries small,  
 Which at mid-height thread the chancel  
 wall,

Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,  
 And voices unlike the voice of man,  
 As if the fiends kept holiday,  
 Because these spells were brought to day  
 I cannot tell how the truth may be;  
 I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

## XXIII

"Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,  
 "And when we are on death-bed laid,  
 O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St  
 John,

Forgive our souls for the deed we have  
 done!"

The Monk return'd him to his cell,  
 And many a prayer and penance  
 sped;

When the convent met at the noontide  
 bell—

The Monk of St Mary's aisle was  
 dead!

Before the cross was the body laid,  
 With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he  
 pray'd

## XXIV.

The Knight breathed free in the  
 morning wind,  
 And strove his hardihood to find;  
 He was glad when he pass'd the tomb-  
 stones grey,  
 Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;  
 For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,  
 Felt like a load upon his breast,

And his joints, with nerves of iron  
twind,  
Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind  
Full fun was he when the dawn of day,  
Began to brighten Cheviot grey;  
He joy'd to see the cheerful light,  
And he said Ave Mary, as well as he  
might.

XXX.

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,  
The sun had brighten'd the Carter's  
side;  
And soon beneath the rising day  
Smile'd Branksome tower, and Tervot's  
side.  
The wild birds told their warbling tale,  
And waken'd every flower that blows,  
And peep'd forth the violet pale,  
And spread her breast the mountain  
side.  
And lovelier than the rose so red,  
Yet paler than the violet pale,  
She early left her sleepless bed,  
The fairest maid of Teviotdale

XXXI.

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,  
And don her kirtle so hastily;  
And the silken knots, which in hurry  
she would make,  
Why tremble her shoulder fingers to tie;  
Why does she stop, and look often around,  
As she glides down the secret stair,  
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-  
hound,  
As she rouses him up from his lair;  
And, though she passes the postern alone,  
Why is not the watchman's lugle  
blown?

XXXII.

The Ladye steps in doubt and dread,  
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;  
The Ladye caresses the rough blood-  
hound,  
Lest his voice should waken the castle  
round,  
The watchman's lugle is not blown,  
I or he was her foster-father's son;

\* A mountain on the Border of England,  
above Jedburgh

And she glides through the greenwood  
at dawn of light,  
To meet Braun Henry, her own true  
Knight.

XXXIII.

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,  
And under the Hawthorn's boughs are  
set.

A furer pair were never seen  
To meet beneath the Hawthorn green  
He was stout, and young, and tall,  
Dressed in battle, and loved in hall.  
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce  
hid,

Lent to her cheek a livelier red,  
Whiter the half, such her swelling breast  
Against the sillen ribbon prest;  
When her blue eyes their secret told,  
Though shielded by her locks of gold —  
Where would you find the peerless fair,  
With Margaret of Branksome might  
compare?

XXXIV.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see  
You listen to my minstrel's;  
Your waving locks ye backward throw,  
And sidelong bend your necks of snow  
Ye've e'en to hear a melting tale,  
Of two true lovers in a dale,  
And how the Knight, with tender fire,  
To punt his faithful passion strove;  
Swore he might at her feet expire,  
But never, never cease to love;  
And how she blush'd and how she sigh'd,  
And, half consenting, half denied,  
And said that she would die a maid; —  
Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,  
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,  
Margaret of Branksome's choice should  
be.

XXXV.

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!  
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;  
Its lightness would my age reprove:  
My hairs are grey, my limbs are old,  
My heart is dead, my veins are cold.  
I may not, must not, sing of love

## VII

But when he rein'd his courser round,  
 And saw his foeman on the ground  
 Lie senseless as the bloody clay,  
 He bade his page to stanch the wound,  
 And there beside the warrior stay,  
 And tend him in his doubtful state,  
 And lead him to Branksome castle-gate  
 His noble mind was only moved  
 For the kinsman of the maid he loved.  
 "This shalt thou do without delay  
 No longer here myself may stay,  
 Unless the swifter I speed away,  
 Short shrift will be at my dying day "

## VIII

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode,  
 The Goblin-Page behind abode,  
 His lord's command he ne'er withstood,  
 Though small his pleasure to do good  
 As the corslet off he took,  
 The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!  
 Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,  
 Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride  
 He thought not to search or stanch the  
 wound,  
 Until the secret he had found.

## IX

The iron band, the iron clasp,  
 Resisted long the elfin grasp  
 For when the first he had undone,  
 It closed as he the next begun  
 Those iron clasps, that iron band,  
 Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,  
 Till he smear'd the cover o'er  
 With the Borderer's curdled gore,  
 A moment then the volume spread,  
 And one short spell therein he read,  
 It had much of glamour\* might,  
 Could make a lady seem a knight;  
 The cobwebs on a dungeon wall  
 Seem tapestry in lordly hall,  
 A nut-shell seem a gilded burge,  
 A sheehing† seem a palace large,  
 And youth seem age, and age seem  
 youth—  
 All was delusion, nought was truth

## X.

He had not read another spell,  
 When on his cheek a buffet fell,

\* Magical delusion † A shepherd's hut

So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,  
 Beside the wounded Deloraine  
 From the ground he rose dismay'd,  
 And shook his huge and matted head;  
 One word he mutter'd, and no more,  
 "Man of age, thou smitest sore!"—  
 No more the Elfin Page durst try  
 Into the wondrous Book to pry,  
 The clasps, though smear'd with Christ-  
 ian gore,  
 Shut faster than they were before.  
 He hid it underneath his cloak—  
 Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,  
 I cannot tell, so not I thrive,  
 It was not given by man alive.

## XI

Unwillingly himself he address'd  
 To do his master's high behest.  
 He lifted up the living corse,  
 And laid it on the weary horse,  
 He led him into Branksome Hall,  
 Before the beards of the warders all,  
 And each did after swear and say,  
 There only pass'd a wain of hay  
 He took him to Lord David's tower,  
 Even to the Ladye's secret bower,  
 And, but that stronger spells were spread,  
 And the door might not be opened,  
 He had laid him on her very bed  
 Whate'er he did of gramarye,\*  
 Was always done maliciously,  
 He flung the warrior on the ground,  
 And the blood well'd freshly from the  
 wound

## XII

As he repass'd the outer court,  
 He spied the fair young child at sport  
 He thought to train him to the wood,  
 For, at a word, be it understood,  
 He was always for ill, and never for  
 good  
 Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay  
 Led him forth to the woods to play;  
 On the drawbridge the warders stout  
 Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out

## XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,  
 Until they came to a woodland brook,

\* Magic

The running stream dissolved the spell,  
And his own death shroud he took.  
Cool, he have had his pleasure wild,  
He had crippled the joints of the noble  
child :

Or, with his fingers long and lean,  
Had strangled him in fendish spleen ;  
But his awful mother he had in dread,  
And also his power was limited ;  
So he bent soon'd on the startled child,  
And darted through the forest wild ;  
Then soon in brook he bounding crossed,  
And laugh'd, and shouted, " Lo ! ! lo ! !  
lo ! ! —

## XIV

Full sore start'd at the wonderous change,  
And frighten'd as a child might be,  
At the word yell and voice strange,  
And the death words of grimace,  
The child, amidst the forest bowers,  
Stood rooted like a hilly flower ;

And when at length, with trembling  
pace,  
He sought to find where Brink come  
lay,

He fear'd to see that grisly face,  
Gleam from some thicket on his way,  
Thus, starting off, he journey'd on,  
And deeper in the wood he gone ; —  
For aye the more he sought his way,  
The farther still he went astray ; —  
Until he heard the mountain round  
Ring to the baying of a hound

## XV

And bark ! and bark ! the deep mouth'd  
bark

Comes nigher still, and nigher  
Burst, on the path a dark blood-hound,  
His twyny muzzle track'd the ground,  
And his red eye shot fire  
Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,  
He flew at him right furiously.  
I woe you would have seen with joy  
The bearing of the gallant boy,  
When, worthy of his noble sire,  
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire !  
He faced the blood-hound manfully,  
And held his little bat on high ;  
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,  
At cautious distance hoarsely baid,

But still in act to spring,  
Whence he'd an archer thro' the glebe,  
And when he saw the hound was stay'd,  
He drew his tough bow-string ;  
But a rough voice cried, " Shoot not, boy !  
Ho ! shoot not, Edward — 'Tis a boy ! "

## XVI

The speaker issued from the wood,  
And cheer'd his fellow's curly mood,  
And quell'd the ten dog's ire.  
He was an English yeoman good,  
And born in Lancashire  
Well could he hit a fallow-deer  
Five hundred feet him fro ;  
With hand more true, and eye more clear,  
No archer bended bow  
His coal black hair, shorn round and close,  
Set off his sun burn'd face ;  
Old England's sign, St. George's cross,  
His turret cap did grace,  
His bugle horn hung by his side,  
All in a wolf skin baldric tied,  
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,  
Had pierced the throat of many a deer

## XVII

His kirtle, made of forest green,  
Reach'd scanty to his knee ;  
And, at his belt, of arrows keen  
A furbish'd sheaf bore he,  
His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,  
No fencer's fence had he ;  
He never counted him a man,  
Would strike below the knee ;  
His steel-cord bow was in his hand,  
And the leech, that was his blood hound's  
brand

## XVIII

He would not do the fair child harm,  
But held him with his powerful arm,  
That he might neither fight nor flee,  
For when the Red Cross spied he,  
The boy strove long and violently.  
" Now, by St. George," the archer cries,  
" I Edward, methinks we have a prize !  
This boy's fair face, and courage free,  
Show he is come of high degree " —

## XIX

" Yes ! I am come of high degree,  
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch ;



Was frequent heard the changing guard,  
And watch-word from the sleepless ward,  
While, wearied by the endless din  
Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

## XXXI.

The noble Dame, amid the broul,  
Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,  
And spoke of danger with a smile,  
Cheer'd the young knights, and council

sage

Held with the chiefs of riper age.  
No tidings of the foe were brought.  
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,  
Nor what in time of truce he sought.

Some said that there were thousands  
ten :

And others ween'd that it was nought  
But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,  
Who came to gather in black mail ; \*  
And Liddesdale, with small avail,

Might drive them lightly back agen  
So pass'd the anxious night away,  
And welcome was the peep of day

CEASED the high sound—the listening  
throng

Applaud the Master of the Song ;  
And marvel much, in helpless age,  
So hard should be his pilgrimage.  
Had he no friend—no daughter dear,  
His wandering toil to share and cheer ;  
No son to be his father's stay,  
And guide him on the rugged way ?

" Ay, once he had—but he was dead ! "  
Upon the harp he stoop'd his head  
And basted himself the strings withal  
To hide the tear, that fain would fall  
In solemn measure, soft and slow,  
Arose a father's notes of woe.

## CANTO FOURTH.

## I

SWIFT Teviot ! on thy silver tide  
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more ;  
No longer steel-clad warriors ride  
Along thy wild and willow'd shore ;  
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,  
All, all is peaceful, all is still,

\* Protection money exacted by freebooters.

As if thy waves, since Time was born,  
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,  
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,  
Nor started at the bugle-horn

## II

Unlike the tide of human time,  
Which, though it change in ceaseless  
flow,

Retains each grief, retains each crime  
Its earliest course was doom'd to know ;  
And, darker as it downward bears,  
Is stained with past and present tears.

Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,  
It still reflects to Memory's eye  
The hour my brave, my only boy.

Fell by the side of great Dundee.  
Why, when the volleying musket play'd  
Against the bloody Highland blade,  
Why was not I beside him laid ?—  
Enough—he died the death of fame ;  
Enough—he died with conquering  
Greece.

## III

Now over Border dale and fell,  
Full wide and far was terror spread ;  
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,  
The peasant left his lowly shed  
The frighten'd flocks and herds were  
pent

Beneath the peel's rude battlement ;  
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,  
While rearing warriors seiz'd the spear  
From Branksome's towers, the watch-  
man's eye

Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,  
Which, curling in the rising sun,  
Show'd southern ravage begun.

## IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—  
" Prepare ye all for blows and blood !  
Watt Tinnin, from the Liddel-side,  
Comes wading through the flood  
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock  
At his lone gate, and prove the lock ;  
It was but last St. Burnabright  
They sieg'd him a whole summer night,  
But fled at morning . well they knew  
In vain he never twang'd the yew  
Right sharp has been the evening shower  
That drove him from his Liddel tower,

And, by my faith, "The gateward shall  
"I think twill fore a Wooden-Rail!"

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman  
Entered the castle, and can.  
He led a small and shaggy dog,  
That throb'd a beat, from head to hock;  
Could bound like any Billiege-steer.  
It bore his wife and children twain,  
A tall clothed wife, and three or four;  
His wife, stout, red, and droll as gold,  
Of a liver loush and leather proud,  
I wish'd her face became the crowd  
He was of strong physique and tall,  
But sparely formed, and lean as rail.  
A better'd morion on his brow;  
A leather neck, as fence-cum;  
On his broad shoulder, loosely hung;  
A Border axe belov'd was hung;  
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,  
Seemed newly dyed with gore;  
His shafts and bow, of wondrous  
strength,  
His hardy partner bore.

## VI.

Flur to the Lady did Timlin show  
The telling of the English foe —  
"Bested Will Howard is marching here,  
And hot Lord Diere, with many a spear,  
And all the German hock but men,  
Who have long lain at Ashten;  
They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,  
And burnt my little lonely tower;  
The fiend receive their souls therefor!  
It had not been burnt this year and more.  
Barn-yard and dwelling, blime bright,  
Served to guide me on my flight;  
But I was chased the livelong night  
Black John of Ake-hay, and Iergus  
Gram,  
Fast upon my traces came,  
Until I turned at Pri through Stroug,  
And shot their hock in the bog,  
Slew Iergus with my lance outright —  
I had him long at high despatch;  
He drove my cows fast Eastern's night."

\* An arrow commanded by the Warden in person

† The hock engroued in a bog; hock was

## VII

Now weary went, from Liddle dale,  
Fast hurry; on, constrain'd the tale;  
As far as they could push by Len,  
Three hours would bring to Teviot's  
strail.  
Three thousand earned Englishmen —  
Meanwhile, full many o' warlike  
band,  
From Teviot, Auld, and Litrack shade,  
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.  
There were saddling and mounting in  
haste,  
There was pecking o'er moor and I  
hock;  
He that was last at the trying place  
Was but lightly held of his gay  
hock.

## VIII

I from fair St Mary's silver wave,  
I from dreary Gamescleugh's dusky  
height,  
His ready lances Thirlestane brave  
Arms'd beneath a banner bright  
The tree-rod fleur-de-luce he claims,  
To wreath his shield, since roy'd James,  
I camp'd by Iala's mossy wave,  
The proud distinction grateful gave,  
For south and scandal jars,  
What time, aye Thirlestane alone,  
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none  
Would march to southern war;  
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,  
Yon sheaf of spears his crest his borne;  
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd —  
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

## IX

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,  
With many a moor-trooper came on,  
And aunc in a golden field,  
The stars and crescent graced his shield,  
Without the bend of Murdiston  
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood  
tower,  
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;  
High o'er Berthwick's mountain flood,  
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood;  
In the dark glen, so deep below,  
The herds of plunder'd England low;

Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,  
Were Border pipes and bugles blown,  
The coursers' neighing he could ken,  
A measured tread of marching men,  
While broke at times the solemn hum,  
The Almyr's sullen kettle-drum;

And banners tall of crimson sheen,  
Above the copse appear;  
And, glistening through the hawthorns  
green  
Shine helm, and shield and spear.

## XVII.

Light forayers, first, to view the ground.  
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round,  
Behind in close array, and fast,  
The Kendal archers, all in green,  
Obedient to the bugle blast.

Advancing from the wood were seen  
To back and guard the archer band,  
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand.  
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,  
With kirtles white, and crosses red,  
Array'd beneath the banner tall,  
That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd wall;  
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,  
Play'd, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells  
on the Border."

## XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,  
The mercenaries, firm and slow,  
Moved on to fight, in dark array,  
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,  
Who brought the band from distant  
Rhine.

And sold their blood for foreign pay  
The camp their home, their law the  
sword,

They knew no country, own'd no lord  
They were not arm'd like England's sons,  
But bore the levin-darting guns;  
Buff coats, all frounced and broider'd  
o'er,

And morsing-horns\* and scarfs they  
wore,

Each better knee was bared, to aid  
The warriors in the escalade;  
All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,  
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

\* Powder-flasks.

## XIX.

But louder still the clamour grew,  
And louder still the minstrels blew,  
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,  
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;  
His men at-arms, with glove and spear,  
Brought up the battle's glittering rear  
There many a youthful knight, full keen  
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;  
With favour in his crest, or glove,  
Memorial of his lady-love.  
So rode they forth in fair array,  
Till full their lengthen'd lines display,  
Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,  
And cried, "St. George, for merry Eng-  
land!"

## XX.

Now every English eye, intent  
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;  
So near they were that they might know  
The straining harsh of each cross-bow,  
On battlement and bartizan  
Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partisan;  
Falcon and culver,\* on each tower,  
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower.  
And flashing armour frequent broke  
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,  
Where upon tower and turret head,  
The seething pitch and molten lead  
Reek'd, like a witch's cauldron red,  
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,  
The wicket opes, and from the wall  
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

## XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,  
His white beard o'er his breast-plate  
spread;

Unbroke by age, erect his seat  
He ruled his eager courser's gait;  
Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance,  
And high, curvetting slow advance:  
In sign of truce, his better hand  
Display'd a peeled willow wand;  
His squire, attending in the rear,  
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear†

\* Ancient pieces of artillery

† A glove upon a lance was the emblem of  
faith among the ancient Borderers who were  
wont, when any one broke his word to expose  
this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain  
at the first Border meeting. This ceremony was  
much dreaded.

When they espied him riding out,  
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout  
Sped to the front of their array,  
To hear what this old knight should say.

## XXII.

"Ye English warden lords, of you  
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,  
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tale,  
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,  
With Kendal bow, and Gil-land brand,  
And all yon mercenary band,  
Upon the borders of fair Scotland?  
My Ladye reads you swift return;  
And, if but one poor straw you burn,  
Or do our towers so much molest  
As scare one swallow from her nest,  
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand  
Shall warm your hearths in Cumber-  
land."—

## XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,  
But calmer Howard took the word;  
"May't please this Dame, Sir Seneschal,  
To seek the castle's outward wall,  
Our pursuivant-at arms shall show  
Both why we came, and when we go"—  
The message sped, the noble Dame  
To the wall's outward circle came;  
Each chief around leand on his spear,  
To see the pursuivant appear.  
All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,  
The lion argent deck'd his breast;  
He led a boy of blooming hue—  
O sight to meet a mother's view!  
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.  
Obsequence met the herald male,  
And thus his master's will he said:—

## XXIV.

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,  
'Gainst ladye fur to draw their swords;  
But yet they may not tamely see,  
All through the Western Wardenry,  
Your law-contemning insmen ride,  
And burn and spoil the Border side,  
And ill besecms your rank and birth  
To make your towers a stemens-firth.  
We chum from thee William of Delo-  
raine,  
That he may suffer march-treason pain

\* An asylum for outlaws.

It was but last St. Cuthbert's even  
He pack'd to Stapleton on Leven,  
Hartel\* the lands of Richard Muirgrave,  
And slew his brother by dint of pike;  
Then, since a fine and widow'd Dame  
There restless riders may not tame,  
Lather receive within thy towers  
Two hundred of my master's powers,  
Or straight they sound their war-son's  
And storm and spoil thy garrison;  
And this fair boy, to London led,  
Shall seal King Edward's page be  
bred."

## XXV.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,  
And stretch'd his little arms on high,  
Implored for aid each well-known face,  
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace  
A moment charged that Ladye's cheer,  
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear,  
She gazed upon the leaders round,  
And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;  
Then, deep within her sobbing breast  
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;  
Unalter'd and collected stood,  
And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

## XXVI.

"Say to your Lords of high emprise,  
Who war on women and on boys,  
That either William of Deloraine  
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-  
treason stain,  
Or else he will the combat take  
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake  
No knight in Cumberland so good,  
But William may count with him kin  
and blood  
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,  
When English blood swell'd Ancram's  
ford,  
And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,  
And bore him ably in the flight,  
Himself had reën him dubb'd a knight.  
For the young heir of Bramsome's line,  
God be his aid, and God be mine;  
Through me no friend shall meet his  
doom;  
Here, while I live, no foe finds room,

\* Plundered

f Note of assault.

Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,  
Take our defiance loud and high,  
Our slogan is their lyke-wake\* dirge,  
Our moat, the grave where they  
shall lie."

## XXVII

Proud she look'd round, applause to  
claim—  
Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame,  
His bugle Wat of Harden blew;  
Pencils and pennons wide were flung,  
To heaven the Border slogan rung,  
"St Mary for the young Buccleuch!"  
The English war-cry answered wide,  
And forward bent each southern spear,  
Each Kendal archer made a stride,  
And drew the bowstring to his ear;  
Each minstrel's war-note loud was  
blown,—  
But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,  
A horseman gallop'd from the rear

## XXVIII.

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless  
said,  
"What treason has your march betray'd?  
What make you here, from aid so far,  
Before you walls, around you war?  
Your soemen triumph in the thought,  
That in the toils the lion's caught.  
Already on dark Ruberslaw  
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;†  
The lances, waving in his train,  
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;  
And on the Liddel's northern strand,  
To bar retreat to Cumberland,  
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry men good,  
Beneath the eagle and the rood,  
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,  
Have to proud Angus come;  
And all the Merse and Lauderdale  
Have risen with haughty Home.  
An exile from Northumberland,  
In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;  
But still my heart was with merry  
England,  
And cannot brook my country's  
wrong;

\* *Lyke-wake*, the watching a corpse previous to interment

† *Weapon-schaw*, the military array of a county

And hard I've spur'd all night to show  
The mustering of coming foe."

## XXIX

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre  
cried,  
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,  
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,  
And waved in gales of Galilee,  
From Branksome's highest towers dis-  
play'd,  
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—  
I level each harquebuss on row;  
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow,  
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,  
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

## XXX.

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly  
hear,  
Nor deem my words the words of fear.  
For who, in field or foray slack,  
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?  
But thus to risk our Border flower  
In strife against a kingdom's power,  
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands  
three,  
Certes, were desperate policy.  
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,  
Ere conscious of the advancing aid.  
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine  
In single fight, and, if he gain,  
He gains for us, but if he's cross'd,  
'Tis but a single warrior lost:  
The rest, retreating as they came,  
Avoid desert, and death, and shame"

## XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook  
His brother Warden's sage rebuke;  
And yet his forward step he stay'd,  
And slow and sullenly obeyed  
But ne'er again the Border side  
Did these two lords in friendship ride.  
And this slight discontent, men say,  
Cost blood upon another day.

## XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again  
Before the castle took his stand,  
His trumpet call'd, with prancing strain,  
The leaders of the Scottish band,

And he defied, in Musgrave's right,  
Stout Deloraine to single fight,  
A gambrel at their feet he laid,  
And thus the terms of fight he said—  
"If in the list good Musgrave's sword  
Vanquish the knight of Deloraine,  
Your youthful chieftain, Brand's son's  
Lord,

Shall hostage for his clan remain—  
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,  
The boy his liberty shall have.  
How'er it falls, the English hard,  
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,  
In peaceful march, like men warn'd,  
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

## XXXIII.

Unconscious of the near relief,  
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,  
Though much the Ladye sage gain-  
say'd;  
For though their hearts were brave and true,

From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,  
How truly was the Regent's aid;  
And yet may guess the noble Dame  
Durst not the secret precedence own,  
Sprung from the art she might not rave,  
By which the coming help was known.  
Closed was the compact, and agreed,  
That lists should be enclosed with speed,

Beneath the castle, on a lawn;  
They fix'd the morrow for the strife,  
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,  
At the fourth hour from peep of day;  
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,  
Or else a champion in his stead,  
Should for himself and chieftain stand,  
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

## XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,  
Full many minstrels sing and say,  
Such combat should be made on horse,  
On forming steed, in full career,  
With brand to aid, when as the spear  
Should shiver in the course—

But he, the jovial Harper, taught  
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,  
In guise which now I say;  
He knew each ordinance and clause  
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle laws,  
In the old Douglas' day.

Hebodd'd not, he, that scoffing tongue  
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,  
Or call his song untrue;

For thus, when they the goblet pled,  
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,  
The Bard of Roul he slay.

On Teriot's side, in fight they stood,  
And tuncful lands were stain'd with  
blood;

Where still the thorn's white branches  
wave,

Memorial o'er his rival's grave

## XXXX

Why should I tell the rigid doom,  
That dropp'd my master to his tomb,  
How Queen's maidens tore their  
hair,

Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,  
And wrung their hands for love of him,

Who died at Jedwood Air?

He died!—his scholars, one by one,

To the cold silent grave are gone,

And I, alas! survive alone,

To muse o'er rivalries of yore,

And grieve that I shall hear no more

The strains, with envy heard before,

For, with my minstrel brethren fled,  
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused: the listening dames again  
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.  
With many a word of kindly cheer,—  
In pity half, and half sincere,—  
Marvell'd the Duchesse how so well  
His legendary song could tell—  
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot,  
Of fiefs, whose memory was not;  
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;  
Of towers, which harbour now the hare;  
Of manners, long since changed and  
gone,

Of chiefs, who under their grey stone  
So long had slept, that sickle fame  
Had blotted from her rolls their name,  
And turned round some new minion's  
head

The fading wreath for which they bled;  
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's  
verge

Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased,  
for ne'er  
Was flattery lost on Poet's ear  
A simple race ' they waste their toil  
For the vain tribute of a smile;  
E'en when in age their flame expires,  
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires  
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,  
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze

Smiled, then, well-pleased, the Aged  
Man,  
And thus his tale continued ran

## CANTO FIFTH

## I

CALL it not vain — they do not err,  
Who say, that when the Poet dies,  
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,  
And celebrates his obsequies  
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,  
For the departed Bard make moan,  
That mountains weep in crystal rill,  
That flowers in tears of balm distil,  
Through his loved groves that breezes  
sigh,  
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply,  
And rivers teach their rushing wave  
To murmur dirges round his grave

## II

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn  
Those things inanimate can mourn,  
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,  
Is vocal with the plaintive wail  
Of those, who, else forgotten long,  
Lived in the poet's faithful song,  
And, with the poet's parting breath,  
Whose memory feels a second death  
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,  
That love, true love, should be forgot,  
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear  
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier  
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,  
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with  
dead,  
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,  
And shrieks along the battle-plain  
The Chief, whose antique crownlet long  
Still sparkled in the feudal song,

Now, from the mountain's misty throne,  
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,  
His ashes undistinguished lie,  
His place, his power, his memory die  
His groans the lonely caverns fill,  
His tears of rage impel the rill;  
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,  
Their name unknown, their praise un-  
sung

## III

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,  
The terms of truce were scarcely made,  
When they could spy, from Branksome's  
towers,  
The advancing march of martial powers  
Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,  
And trampling steeds were faintly heard,  
Bright spears above the columns dun,  
Glanced momentarily to the sun;  
And feudal banners fair display'd  
The bands that moved to Branksome's  
aid

## IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,  
From the fair Middle Marches came,  
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,  
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!  
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,  
Where the Seven Spears of Wedder-  
burne

Their men in battle-order set;  
And Swinton laid the lance in rest,  
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest —  
Of Clarence's Plantagenet  
Nor list I say what hundreds more,  
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,  
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,  
Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,  
And Hepburn's mingled banners come,  
Down the steep mountain glittering far,  
And shouting still, "A Home! a  
Home!"

## V.

Now sque and knight, from Branksome  
sent,  
On many a courteous message went;  
To every chief and lord they paid  
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful  
aid,  
And told them,—how a truce was made,

And how a day of fight was given  
 'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine,  
 And how the Lady pray'd them  
 dear,  
 That all would stay the fight to see,  
 And reign, in love and courtesy,  
 To taste of Branksome cheer  
 Nor, while they bide to feast each Scot,  
 Were England's noble Lords forgot.  
 Himself, the hoary Senechal  
 Rode forth, in stately terms to call  
 Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall,  
 Accepted Howard, then whom I might  
 Was never dubi'd, more bold in fight,  
 Nor, when from war and armour free,  
 More fured for stately courtesy:  
 But angry Diere rather chose  
 In his pavilion to repose

## VI

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,  
 How the two hostile armies met?  
 Deeming it were no easy task  
 To keep the truce which here was set;  
 Where martial spirits, all on fire,  
 Breathed only blood and mortal ire —  
 By mutual insults, mutual blows,  
 By habit, and by nation, foes.  
 They met on Teviot's strand;  
 They met and sate them mangled down,  
 Without a threat, without a frown,  
 As brothers meet in foreign land:  
 The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,  
 Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,  
 Were interchanged in greeting dear;  
 Visors were raised, and faces shown,  
 And many a friend, to friend made  
 known,  
 Partook of social cheer  
 Some drove the jolly bowl about;  
 With dice and draughts some chased  
 the day,  
 And some, with many a merry shout,  
 In riot, revelry, and rout,  
 Pursued the foot-ball play.

## VII.

Yet, be it known, had hughes blown,  
 Or sign of war been seen,  
 Those hands, so fair together ranged,  
 Those hands, so frankly interchanged,  
 Had dyed with gore the green —  
 The merry shout by Teviot-side

Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,  
 And in the groan of death,  
 And whingers,\* now in friendship bare,  
 The social meal to part and share,  
 Had found a bloody hearth  
 'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change  
 Was not infrequent, nor held strange,  
 In the old Border-day —  
 But yet on Branksome's towers and town,  
 In peaceful merriment, sunk down  
 The sun's declining ray.

## VIII

The blithesome signs of wassel ray  
 Deceiv'd not with the dying day  
 Saw through the latticed windows tall  
 Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,  
 Divided square by shafts of stone,  
 Huge slates of ruddy lustre shone,  
 Nor less the gilded rosters ring  
 With merry harp and beakers' clang —  
 And frequent, on the darkening plain,  
 Loud holla, whoop, or whistle ran,  
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,  
 Gave the shrill watchword of their  
 clan,  
 And revellers o'er their bowls, proclaim  
 Douglas' or Diere's conquering name.

## IX.

I less frequent heard, and fainter still,  
 At length the various clamour, died.  
 And you might hear, from Branksome  
 hill,  
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;  
 Sate when the changing sentinel  
 The challenge of his watch could tell;  
 And save, where, through the dark  
 profound,  
 The clanging axe and hammer's sound  
 Rung from the nether lawn;  
 For many a busy hand toil'd there,  
 Strong pales to shape, and beams to  
 square,  
 The lists' dread barriers to prepare  
 Against the morrow's dawn.

## X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,  
 Despite the Dame's reproving eye,  
 Not mark'd she, as she left her seat,  
 Full many a stifled sigh,

\* A sort of knife, or poniard



For many a noble warrior strove  
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,  
And many a bold ally —  
With throbbing head and anxious heart,  
All in her lonely bower apart,  
In broken sleep she lay  
By times, from silken couch she rose,  
While yet the banner'd hosts repose,  
She view'd the dawning day  
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,  
First woke the loveliest and the best

## VI.

She gazed upon the inner court,  
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;  
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and  
snort,  
Had rung the livelong yesterday;  
Now still as death, till stalking slow, —  
The jingling spurs announced his  
tread, —  
A stately warrior pass'd below;  
But when he raised his plumed head —  
Blessed Mary! can it be? —  
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,  
He walks through Branksome's hostile  
towers,  
With fearless step and free  
She dared not sign, she dared not speak —  
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,  
His blood the price must pay!  
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,  
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,  
Shall buy his life a day

## VII.

Yet was his hazard small; for well  
You may bethink you of the spell  
Of that sly urchin page;  
This to his lord he did impart,  
And made him seem, by glamour art,  
A knight from Hermitage.  
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,  
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,  
For all the vassalage —  
But O! what magic's quaint disguise  
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!  
She started from her seat;  
While with surprise and fear she strove,  
And both could scarcely master love —  
Lord Henry's at her feet.

## XIII

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad  
That foul malicious urchin had  
To bring this meeting round;  
For happy love's a heavenly sight,  
And by a vile malignant sprite  
In such no joy is found;  
And oft I've deem'd, perchance he  
thought  
Their erring passion might have wrought  
Sorrow, and sin, and shame;  
And death to Cranstoun's gallant  
Knight,  
And to the gentle lady bright,  
Disgrace, and loss of fame.  
But earthly spirit could not tell  
The heart of them that loved so well  
True love's the gift which God has given  
To man alone beneath the heaven:  
It is not fantasy's hot fire,  
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly,  
It liveth not in fierce desire,  
With dead desire it doth not die,  
It is the secret sympathy,  
The silver link, the silken tie,  
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,  
In body and in soul can bind. —  
Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,  
To tell you of the approaching fight.

## XIV.

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,  
The pipe's shrill port\* aroused each  
clun,  
In haste, the deadly strife to view,  
The trooping warriors eager ran:  
Thick round the lists their lances stood,  
Like blasted pines in Ettrick Wood;  
To Branksome many a look they threw  
The combatants' approach to view,  
And banded many a word of boast,  
About the knight each favour'd most

## XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;  
For now arose disputed claim,  
Of who should fight for Deloraine,  
'Twixt Harden and twixt Thirlestaine.  
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,  
And frowning brow on brow was bent;

\* A martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes.

But yet not long the strife—for, lo !  
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,  
Strong, as it seem'd and free from pain,  
In armor smother'd from top to toe,  
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.  
The Dame her charm successful knew,  
And the fierce chiefs their charms with-  
drew.

## XVI.

When for the lots they sought the plan,  
The stately Lady's sullen son  
And noble Howard hold ;  
Unarmed by her side he wou'd,  
And each, in courteous phrase, they  
talk'd

Of feats of arms of old,  
Coolly his garb—his Flemish ruff  
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,  
With satin slash'd and lined,  
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,  
His cloak was all of Poland fur,  
His hose with silver tinsel,  
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,  
Hung in a broad and studded belt,  
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderer,  
Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

## XVII

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,  
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,  
Whose foot cloth sweep'd the ground :  
White was her wimple, and her veil,  
And her face look'd a chaplet pale  
Of whitest roses bound ;  
The lonely Angus, by her side,  
In courtesy to chide her tried,  
Without his aid, her hand in vain  
Had strove to girdle her broader'd rein  
He deem'd, she shudder'd at the sight  
Of warriors met for mortal fight,  
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,  
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,  
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,  
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

## XVIII.

Prize of the field, the young Breckinich,  
An English knight led forth to view ;  
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,  
So much he long'd to see the fight

With'n the lists, in knightly pride,  
His horse and haughty Dame ride ;  
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,  
As marshals of the mortal field ;  
While to each knight their care assign'd  
Take vantage of the sun and wind  
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,  
In King and Queen, and Warden's  
name,

That none, while live the strife,  
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,  
Aid to a champion to afford,  
On peril of his life ;  
And not a breath the silence broke,  
Till thus the alternate Herald spoke :—

## XIX.

## ENGLISH HERALD

"Here standeth Riel and of Musgrave,  
Good knight and true, and freely  
born,  
Ameeds from Deloraine to crave,  
For foul despoils of scathe and scorn  
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine  
Is traitor false by Border laws ;  
Thus with his sword he will maintain,  
So help him God, and his good  
cause !"

## XX.

## SCOTTISH HERALD

"Here standeth William of Deloraine,  
Good knight and true, of noble strain,  
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,  
Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his  
coat.  
And that, so help him God above !  
He will on Musgrave's body prove,  
He lies most foully in his throat."

## LORD DACRE.

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight !  
Sound trumpets !"—

## LORD HOWE

—"God defend the right !"—  
Then Teviot's howl thine echoes rang,  
When bugle sound and trumpet-clang  
Let loose the martial foes,  
And in mid list, with shield poised high,  
And measured step and wary eye,  
The combatants did close.

## XXI

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,  
Ye lovely listeners, to hear  
How to the axe the helms did sound,  
And blood pour'd down from many a  
wound,  
For desperate was the strife, and long,  
And either warrior fierce and strong  
But, were each dame a listening knight,  
I well could tell how warriors fight  
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,  
Seen the clay more with bayonet clashing,  
Seen through red blood the war-horse  
dashing,  
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,  
To yield a step for death or life —

## XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow  
Hus stretch'd him on the bloody plain;  
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!  
Thence never shalt thou rise again!  
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand  
Undo the visor's barred band,  
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,  
And give him room for life to gasp!  
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,  
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!  
Of all his guilt let him be shaven,  
And smooth his path from earth to  
heaven!

## XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped.—  
His naked foot was dyed with red,  
As through the lists he ran:  
Unmindful of the shouts on high,  
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,  
He rused the dying man;  
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,  
As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer,  
And still the crucifix on high  
He holds before his darkening eye,  
And still he bends an anxious ear,  
His faltering penitence to hear,  
Still props him from the bloody sod,  
Still, even when soul and body part,  
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,  
And bids him trust in God!  
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's  
o'er!  
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

## XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,  
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,  
The silent victor stands;  
His beaver did he not unclasp,  
Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp  
Of gratulating hands  
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,  
Mingled with seeming terror, rise  
Among the Scottish bands;  
And all, amid the throng'd array,  
In panic haste gave open way  
To a half-naked ghastly man,  
Who downward from the castle ran:  
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,  
And wild and haggard look'd around,  
As dizzy, and in pain;  
And all, upon the armed ground,  
Knew William of Deloraine!  
Each ladye sprung from seat with speed  
Vaulted each marshal from his steed,  
“And who art thou,” they cried,  
“Who hast this battle fought and won?”  
His plumed helm was soon undone—  
‘Cranstoun of Teviot-side’  
For thus fair prize I’ve fought and  
won,”—  
And to the Ladye led her son

## XXV

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,  
And often press'd him to her breast;  
For, under all her dauntless show,  
Her heart had throbb'd at every blow;  
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she  
greet,  
Though low he kneel'd at her feet.  
Me lists not tell what words were made  
What Douglas, Home, and Howard  
said —

—For Howard was a generous foe—  
And how the clan united pray'd  
The Ladye would the feud forego,  
And deign to bless the nuptial hour  
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot  
Flower.

## XXVI

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,  
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,  
Then broke her silence stern and still,  
“Not you, but Fate, has vanquish'd  
me;

Their influence kindly stars may shower  
On Teutonic's tale and Britain's tower,  
For pride is quelled, and flowers free"—  
She took fair Margaret by the hand,  
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might  
stand;

That hand to Craustoun's lord gave  
she—

"As I am true to thee and thine,  
Do thou be true to me and mine!

This clasp of love our bond shall be;  
For this is your betrothing day,  
And all these noble lords shall stay,  
To grace it with their company."

XXVII

All as they left the listed plain,  
Much of the story she did gain;  
How Craustoun fought with Deloraine,  
And of his page, and of the Book  
Which from the wounded knight he  
took;

And how he sought her castle high,  
That morn, by help of rammye,  
How, in Sir William's armour dight,  
Stolen by his page, while slept the night,  
He took on him the single fight.  
But half his tale he left unsaid,  
And linger'd till he found the maid—  
Cared not the Lady to betray  
Her mystic arts in view of day;  
But well she thought, ere midnight came,  
Of that strange page the pride to tame,  
From her foul hands the Book to save,  
And send it back to Michael's grave.—  
Need not to tell each tender word  
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Craustoun's  
lord;

Nor how she told of former woes,  
And how her bosom fell and rose,  
While he and Musgrave handied blows—  
Needs not these lovers' joy to tell;  
One day, fair maids, you'll know them  
well.

XXVIII

William of Deloraine, some chance  
Had waken'd from his deathlike trance;  
And taught that, in the listed plain,  
Another, in his arms and shield,  
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,  
Under the name of Deloraine.

Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,  
And hence his piece once scur'd the clan,  
Who held him for some fleeting wrath,  
And not a man of blood and breath  
Not much this newly he loved,  
Yet, when he saw what hip had  
proved,

He greeted him right heartlie:  
He would not waken old delate,  
For he was void of rancorous hate,  
Though rude, and scant of courtesy;  
In words he spilt but seldom blood,  
Unless when a man at arms withstood,  
Or, as was met, for deadly feud.  
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,  
'Taken in fair fight from gallant foe.

And so 'twas seen of him, then now,  
When on dead Musgrave he look'd  
down,

Grief darkened on his rugged brow,  
Though half disguised with a frown;  
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,  
His former's epitaph he made—

XXIX

"Now, Richard Musgrave, hest thou  
here!

I ween, my deadly enemy;  
For, if I slew thy brother dear,  
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;  
And when I lay in dungeon dark,  
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,  
Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,  
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.  
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,  
And thou wert now alive, as I,  
No mortal man should us divide,  
Till one, or both of us, did die.  
Yet rest thee God! for well I know  
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.  
In all the northern counties here,  
Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,  
Thou wert the best to follow gear!  
'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,  
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,  
Cheer the dark blood hound on his  
way,

And with the bugle rouse the fray!  
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,  
Dark Musgrave were alive again."

\* The spectral apparition of a living person

## XXX.

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band  
Were bowing back to Cumberland.  
They roused brave Musgrave from the  
field,

And laid him on his bloody shield,  
On levell'd lances, four and four,  
By turns, the noble burden bore  
Before, at times, upon the gale,  
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;  
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,  
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul -  
Around, the horsemen slowly rode,  
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;  
And thus the gallant knight they bore,  
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;  
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,  
And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hush'd  
the song,

The mimic march of death prolong;  
Now seems it far, and now a-near,  
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;  
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,  
Now faintly dies in valley deep;  
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,  
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;  
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,  
Rung the full choir in choral stave

After due pause, they bade him tell  
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,  
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,  
Wander a poor and thankless soil,  
When the more generous Southern Land  
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er  
His only friend, his harp, was dear,  
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high  
Above his flowing poesy:  
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer  
Misprised the land he loved so dear;  
High was the sound, as thus again  
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

## CANTO SIXTH

## I

BREATHES there the man, with soul so  
dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land!  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him  
burn'd.

As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,  
From wandering on a foreign strand!  
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;  
For him no minstrel raptures swell,  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;  
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch, concentrat all in self,  
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
And, doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung

## II

O Caledonia! stern and wild,  
Meet nurse for a poetic child!  
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,  
Land of the mountain and the flood,  
Land of my sires! what mortal hand  
Can e'er untie the filial band,  
That knits me to thy rugged strand!  
Still, as I view each well-known scene,  
Think what is now, and what hath been,  
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,  
Sole friends thy woods and streams were  
left;

And thus I love them better still,  
Even in extremity of ill.  
By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,  
Though none should guide my feeble  
way;

Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,  
Although it chill my wither'd cheek;\*  
Still lay my head by Tenvot Stone,  
Though there, forgotten and alone,  
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

## III

Not scorn'd like me! to Branksome Hall  
The Minstrels came, at festive call;  
Trooping they came, from near and far,  
The jovial priests of mirth and war,  
Alike for feast and fight prepared,  
Battle and banquet both they shared.  
Of late, before each martial clan,  
They blew their death-note in the van,

\* This and the three following lines form the inscription on the monument to Scott in the market-place of Selkirk.

But now, for every merry mate,  
Rose the portcullis' iron grate;  
They sound the pipe, they strike the  
trump;  
They dance, they revel, and they sing,  
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

## IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare  
The splendour of the spousal rite,  
How matter'd in the church of love  
Both maid and matron, square and  
knave;  
Me lists not tell of bowches rare,  
Of wantles gown, and braided hair,  
And kirtles furr'd with miniver;  
What plumes waved the altar round,  
How spurs and ringy charabets sound,  
And hard it were for hand to speak  
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek;  
That lovely hae which comes and flies,  
As awe and shame alternate rise!

## V.

Some bank have said, the Ladye high  
Chapel or altar e'en, not high;  
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,  
So much she fear'd each holy place,  
False slanders there I trust right  
well  
She wrought not by forbidden spell;  
For mighty words and signs have power  
O'er sprites in planetary hour.  
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,  
Who tamper with such dangerous art,  
But thus for faithful truth I say,  
The Ladye by the altar stood,  
Of sable velvet her array,  
And on her head a crimson hood,  
With pearls embrouder'd and entwined,  
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;  
A merlin sat upon her wrist,  
Held by a leash of silk on twit

## VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon.  
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,  
And in the lofty arched hall  
Was spread the gorgeous festival.  
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,  
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;

Pages, with ready blade, were there,  
The mighty mead to carve and share;  
O'er cups, lion chews, and crane,  
And princely parcock's gilded train,  
And o'er the bear his garnish'd bow,  
And eagle from St. Mary's wave;  
O'er pismire and venison,  
The priest had spoke his benison.  
Then rose the foot of the din,  
Above, beneath, within, without;  
For, from the lofty balcony,  
Rang trumpet, shallop, and psaltery;  
Their clanging brass, cold warriors quaff'd,  
Lowly they stoop'd, and lowly laugh'd;  
Who peep'd you'd I might, in tone more  
mild,

To ladies fur, and ladies sale.  
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on  
beak,  
The clamour join'd with whistling  
scream,  
And flapp'd their wings, and shook  
their bells,

In concert with the star hounds' yell.  
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,  
From Bordaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;  
Their taste the boys evers ply,  
And all is mirth and revelry.

## VII.

The Golden Page, omitting still  
No opportunity of ill,  
Strave now, while blood ran hot and high,  
To more debate and jealousy,  
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,  
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,  
And now in humour highly cross'd,  
About some steeds his hand had lost,  
High words to words succeeding still,  
Snote, with his gauntlet, stout Henthull,  
A hot and hardy Rutherford,  
Whom men call'd Dickon Draw the  
sword,

He took it on the page's cry,  
Henthull had driven these steeds awry.  
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,  
The kindling discord to compose.  
Stout Rutherford right little said,  
But but his glove, and shook his head—  
A fortnight thence, in Ingelwood,  
Stout Conrad, cold, and drench'd in  
blood,

His bosom gored with many a wound,  
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found,  
Unknown the manner of his death,  
Gone was his brand, both sword and  
sheath,  
But ever from that time 'twas said,  
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

## VIII.

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye  
Might his foul treachery espye,  
Now sought the castle buttery,  
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,  
Revel'd as merrily and well  
As those that sat in lordly selle  
Watt Tintinn, there, did frankly raise  
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes,  
And he, as by his breeding bound,  
To Howard's merry-men sent it round  
To quit them, on the English side,  
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,  
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride."—  
At every pledge, from vat and pail,  
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown  
ale;

While shout the riders every one  
Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their  
clan,  
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,  
When in the clench the buck was ta'en

## IX.

The wily page, with vengeful thought,  
Remember'd him of Tintinn's yew,  
And swore, it should be dearly bought  
That ever he the arrow drew.  
First, he the yeoman did molest,  
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;  
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,  
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his  
wife;  
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,  
At unawares he wrought him harm;  
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,  
Dash'd from his lips his can of beer,  
Then, to his knee slir creeping on,  
With bodkin pierc'd him to the bone:  
The venom'd wound, and festering joint,  
Long after rued that bodkin's point.  
The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,  
And board and flagons overturn'd.

Riot and clamour wild began;  
Back to the hall the Urchin ran;  
Took in a darkling nook his post,  
And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost! lost!  
lost!"

## X.

By this, the Dame, lest further fray  
Should mar the concord of the day,  
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.  
And first stept forth old Albert Greeme,  
The Minstrel of that ancient name  
Was none who struck the harp so well,  
Within the Land Debateable;  
Well frended, too, his hardy kin,  
Whoever lost, were sure to win:  
They sought the beeves that made their  
broth,  
In Scotland and in England both  
In homely guise, as nature bade,  
His simple song the Borderer said

## XI

## ALBERT GREEME.

It was an English ladye bright,  
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)  
And she would marry a Scottish knight,  
For Love will still be lord of all.  
Blithely they saw the rising sun,  
When he shone fur on Carlisle wall,  
But they were sad ere day was done,  
Though Love was still the lord of all.  
Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,  
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle  
wall,  
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,  
For ire that Love was lord of all.  
For she had lands, both meadow and lea,  
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle  
wall,  
And he swore her death, ere he would see  
A Scottish knight the lord of all.

## XII

That wine she had not tasted well,  
(The sun shines fur on Carlisle wall),  
When dead, in her true love's arms, she  
fell,  
For Love was still the lord of all!

He pierced her brother to the heart,  
 Where the sun shines fur on Carlisle  
 wall:—  
 A perish all would true love part,  
 That Love may still be lord of all;  
 And then he took the cross divine,  
 (Where the sun shines fur on Carlisle  
 wall.)  
 And died for her sake in Palestine;  
 So Love was still the lord of all  
 On all ye lovers, that faithful prove,  
 (The sun shines fur on Carlisle wall.)  
 Nay for their souls who died for love,  
 For Love shall still be lord of all!

## XIII.

He ended Albert's simple lay,  
 And ere a bird of lovelier part;  
 He cannot rhyme, and roundelay,  
 Remov'd in haughty Henry's court  
 Were rung this harp, unavall'd long,  
 Fitztraver of the silver song!  
 The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—  
 Who has not heard of Surrey's  
 lyre?  
 His was the hero's soul of fire,  
 And his the bard's immortal name,  
 And his was love, exalted high  
 Above all the glow of chivalry.

## XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,  
 And oft, within some olive grove,  
 When even came with twinkling star,  
 They sang of Surrey's abent love.  
 His step the Italian peasant say'd,  
 And deem'd that spirits from on high,  
 Round where some hermit saint was  
 laid,  
 Were breathing heavenly melody,  
 So sweet did harp and voice combine,  
 To praise the name of Geraldine.

## XV.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say  
 The young thy faithful boomer knew,  
 When Surrey, of the deathless lay,  
 Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew!  
 Regardless of the tyrant's frown,  
 His harp call'd wrath and vengeance  
 down.  
 He left, for Naworth's iron towers,  
 Windsor's green glades, and courtly  
 bower,  
 And, faithful to his patron's name,  
 With Howard still Fitztraver came;  
 Lord William's foremost favourite he,  
 And chief of all his minstrelsy.

## XVI.

## FIFTEENTH.

'Twas All soul's eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;  
 He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,  
 Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,  
 When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,  
 To show to him the body of his heart,  
 Albert betwixt them roav'd the ocean grime;  
 Yet to the sage had hight to ply his part,  
 That he should see her form in life and limb,  
 And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

## XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of grimace,  
 To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,  
 Save that before a mirror, huge and high,  
 A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light  
 On mystic implements of magic might  
 On crows, and character, and talisman,  
 And amulet, and altar, nothing bright  
 For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,  
 As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.



## XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,  
 Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam,  
 And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,  
 Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;  
 Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem  
 To form a lordly and a lofty room,  
 Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,  
 Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,  
 And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom

## XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair  
 The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!  
 O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,  
 Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;  
 All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,  
 And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,  
 Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find.—  
 That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptured line,  
 That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

## XX.

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,  
 And swept the goodly vision all away—  
 So royal envy roll'd the murky storm  
 O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.  
 Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay  
 On thee, and on thy children's latest line,  
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,  
 The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,  
 The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

## XXI

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong  
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song,  
 These hated Henry's name as death,  
 And those still held the ancient faith—  
 Then, from his seat, with lofty air,  
 Rose Harold, bard of brave St Clair;  
 St Clair, who, feasting high at Home,  
 Had with that lord to battle come.  
 Harold was born where restless seas  
 Howl round the storm-swept Orcaes;  
 Where erst St Clairs held princely sway  
 O'er isle and islet, strait and bay,—  
 Still nods their palace to its fall,  
 Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—  
 Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland  
 rave,  
 As if grim Odin rode her wave;

And watch'd, the whilst, with visage  
 pale,  
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;  
 For all of wonderful and wild  
 Had rapture for the lonely child

## XXII

And much of wild and wonderful  
 In these rude isles might fancy cull;  
 For thither came, in times afar,  
 Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,  
 The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and  
 blood,  
 Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;  
 Kings of the main their leaders brave,  
 Their barks the dragons of the wave  
 And there, in many a stormy vale,  
 The Scald had told his wondrous tale,

And many a Runic column high  
Had witness'd grim idolatry.  
And thus Lord Harold, in his youth,  
Learn'd many a Siga's rhyme uncouth,—  
Of that Sea-Snake, trimer low-cird,  
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;  
Of those dread Maels, whose hideous  
spell

Madden'd the battle's bloody swell;  
Of Chief, who, guided thron, like gloom  
By the pale death-light of the tomb,  
Hush'd the prayer of warriors old,  
Their skeletons wrench'd from corpses'  
hold,

Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,  
As I hie the dead arise to arms!  
With war and wonder all on flame,  
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,  
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood  
tree,

He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;  
Yet something of the Northern spell  
Mix'd with the softer numbers well

## XIII

## HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies pray!  
No hughty feat of arms I tell;  
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,  
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!  
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!  
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,  
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day

"The blackning wave is edg'd with  
white,

To inch\* and rock the sea-mews fly;  
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,  
Whose screams forebode that wreck  
nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view  
A wet shroud swathed round ladye  
gay,

Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch;  
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"—

"'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir  
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,  
But that my ladye-mother there  
Sits lonely in her castle hall.

\* *Did, &c.*

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,  
And Ladye ay at the ring sits well,  
But that my sire the wine will chide,  
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,  
A wood-house blue\* was seen to gleam;  
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,  
And resister than the bright moon-  
beam

It glared on Roslin's catted rock,  
It redded all the coarse wood glen;  
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,  
An' seen from cavern'd Ha'vhornden

Scar'd all on fire that chapel proud,  
Where Roslin's chiefs uncouth'd lie,  
Each Baron, for a while shroud,  
Sheathed in his iron piroply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,  
Deep sacristy and altar's pale,  
Shone every pillar foliage bound,  
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail

Blaz'd battlement and pinnet high,  
Blaz'd every rose carved buttress fur—  
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh  
The lordly line of high St Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold  
Laid buried within that proud chapel;  
Each one the holy vault doth hold—  
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle.

And each St Clair was buried there,  
With candle, with book, and with  
knell,

But the sea-caves rung, and the wild  
winds sung,  
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle!

## XIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,  
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken-  
ed hall,

Though, long before the sinking day,  
A wondrous shade involved them all:

It was not eddying mist or fog,  
Dram'd by the sun from fen or bog;  
Of no eclipse had vices told;

And yet, as it came on apace,  
Each one could scarce his neighbour's  
face,

Could scarce his own stretch'd hand  
behold.

A secret horror check'd the feast,  
And chill'd the soul of every guest ;  
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,  
She knew some evil on the blast ;  
The elvish page fell to the ground,  
And, shuddering, mutter'd, "Found '  
found ' found ' "

## XXV.

Then sudden, through the darken'd air  
A flash of lightning came ,  
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,  
The castle seem'd on flame  
Glanced every rafter of the hall,  
Glanced every shield upon the wall ;  
Each trophied beam, each sculptured  
stone,  
Were instant seen, and instant gone ;  
Full through the guests' bedazzled band  
Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,  
And fill'd the hall with smouldering  
smoke,  
As on the elvish page it broke.

It broke with thunder long and loud,  
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the  
proud,—  
From sea to sea the larum rung ;  
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle  
withal,  
To arms the startled warders  
sprung  
When ended was the dreadful roar,  
The elvish dwarf was seen no more !

## XXVI.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,  
Some saw a sight, not seen by all,  
That dreadful voice was heard by some,  
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN,  
COME !"

And on the spot where burst the  
brand,  
Just where the page had flung him  
down,  
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,  
And some the waving of a gown  
The guests in silence prayed and shook,  
And terror dimm'd each lofty look  
But none of all the astonished train  
Was so dismay'd as Deloraine.  
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,  
'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er return ;

For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,  
Like him of whom the story ran,  
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man  
At length, by fits, he darkly told,  
With broken hint, and shuddering cold—  
That he had seen right certainly,  
*A shape with amice wrap'd around,  
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,  
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea ;*  
And knew—but how it matter'd not—  
It was the wizard, Michael Scott

## XXVII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,  
All trembling heard the wondrous tale,  
No sound was made, no word was  
spoke,  
Till noble Angus silence broke ;  
And he a solemn sacred plight  
Did to St Bride of Douglas make,  
That he a pilgrimage would take,  
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake  
Of Michael's restless spnte.  
Then each, to ease his troubled breast,  
To some bless'd saint his prayers ad  
dress'd .

Some to St Modan made their vows,  
Some to St Mary of the Loves,  
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,  
Some to our Ladye of the Isle ,  
Each did his patron witness make,  
That he such pilgrimage would take,  
And monks should sing, and bells should  
toll,

All for the weal of Michael's soul  
While vows were ta'en, and prayers  
were pray'd,  
'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,  
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

## XXVIII

Nought of the bridal will I tell,  
Which after in short space befell  
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair  
Bless'd Tevnot's Flower, and Cranstoun's  
heir  
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain  
To wake the note of mirth again  
More meet it were to mark the day  
Of penitence, and prayer divine.  
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array  
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

## XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,  
And arms enfolded on his breast,  
Did every pilgrim go;  
The standers by might hear beneath  
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,  
Through all the lengthen'd row:  
No lordly look, nor martial stride;  
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,  
Forgotten their renown,  
Silent and slow, like phantoms they glide  
To the high altar's hallow'd side,  
And there they knelt them down.  
Above the suppliant chieftains wave  
The banners of departed brave,  
Beneath the letter'd stone, were laid  
The ashes of their fathers dead;  
From many a garish'd niche around,  
Stern saints and tortured martyrs  
frown'd.

## XXX.

And close up the dim aisle afar,  
With shaven coul and scapular,  
And snowy white stoles, in order due,  
The holy Fathers, two and two,  
In long procession came;  
Taper, and book, and book they bare,  
And holy banner, flourish'd fur  
With the Redeemer's name  
Above the prostrate pilgrim band  
The retired Abbot stretch'd his hand,  
And bless'd them as they kneel'd;  
With holy cross he signed them all,  
And pray'd they might be sage in hall,  
And fortunate in field.  
Then mass was sung, and prayer, were  
said,  
And solemn requiem for the dead;  
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,  
For the departed spirit's weal;  
And ever in the office close  
The hymn of intercession rose;  
And for the echoing aisles prolong  
The awful burthen of the song—  
DIES ILLI, DIES ILLI,  
SOLVIT SACRUM IN FAMULA;  
While the pealing organ ring;  
Were it meet with sacred strain  
To close my lay, so light and vain,  
Thus the holy Fathers sung:—

## XXXI

## HYMN FOR THE DEAD

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,  
When heaven and earth shall pass away,  
What power shall be the sinner's stay?  
How shall he meet that dreadful day?  
When, chivering like a parched scroll,  
The flaming heavens together roll,  
When louder yet, and yet more dread,  
Swells the high trump that wakes the  
dead!  
Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,  
When man to judgment wakes from  
slay,  
Be Thou the trembling sinner's stay,  
Though heaven and earth shall pass  
away!

Heard'st thou the harp—the Minstrel gone  
And did he wander forth alone?  
Alone, in indigence and age,  
To linger out his pilgrimage?  
No!—close beneath proud Newark's  
tower,  
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;  
A simple hut, but there was seen  
The little garden hedged with green,  
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.  
There shelter'd wanderers, by the  
blaze,  
Oft heard the tale of other days,  
For much he loved to open his door,  
And give the aid he begg'd before  
So pass'd the winter's day; but still,  
When summer smiled on sweet Bow-  
hill,  
And July's eve, with balmy breath,  
Wav'd the blue-bells on Newark heath;  
Where thro' theless ungirded shaw,  
And corn was green on Carterhough,  
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's  
oak,  
The aged Harper's soul awoke!  
Then would he sing achievements high,  
And circumstance of chivalry,  
Till the rapt traveller would stay,  
Forgetful of the closing day,  
And noble youths the strain to hear,  
Forsook the hunting of the deer,  
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,  
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

MARMION.  
A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

*Alert! For Scotland's Independence  
They will strive to be free!  
That Scotland's Bard!—I have the power,  
The power of our poetry!*

1820.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
HENRY, LORD MONTAGUT,  
Esq. &c. &c.

THIS ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED  
BY THE AUTHOR

## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

*It is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the public have honoured with some degree of applause, should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of MARMION must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale, yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.*

*The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September, 1513.*

## MARMION.

AFTER a success so brilliant and profitable as that which had been attained by the "Lay," it was only natural that a young and ambitious writer should be tempted quickly to resume his abode as to the muse especially in the circumstances in which Scott was placed. He saw before him little prospect of advancement in his profession, for the practice of which he had never felt any inclination, and which continued to become more distasteful to him. Having to choose between literature and law, he was ready to decide in favour of the former, had not the sheriffship which he obtained in Dec. 1799, and the reversion of the clerkship of Session, which was assigned to him a few years later, enabled him to take a middle course, to apply himself to letters without rendering himself dependent for an income on the profits of his pen. The good fortune which crowned his first serious essay in literature confirmed this resolution, and another poem was quickly planned. With characteristic prudence Scott had determined not to be too hasty in this second venture, and to bestow upon it the thought and polish which the public would naturally expect from an author of his reputation. Some pecuniary embarrassment on the part of his brother Thomas caused him to break this cautious resolution. Constable, in association with some of the London book-sellers, was quite willing to pay down a thousand pounds for the unwritten poem, and Scott was thus enabled to assist his brother in his difficulties. Byron, unaware of the generous purpose to which Scott applied the money, affected to be shocked at the mercenary nature of the bargain. The publishers, however, were only too glad to enter into the arrangement, and they were certainly no losers by their confidence and liberality. Commenced in Nov. 1805, "Marmion" was ready for the press in February, 1806. Two thousand copies of the first edition in quarto, at a guinea and a half, were disposed of in a month. A second edition, of 3,000 copies, immediately followed, and two other editions, each of the same extent, were called for before the end of 1809. By the beginning of 1836 as many as 50,000 copies had been disposed of.

Large as was the circulation of "Marmion," it can hardly be said to have been read with the same relish as the "Lay," yet it was in many respects an advance. Even Jeffrey, who was very severe on the defects of the second poem, is disposed to admit that if it has greater faults it has also greater beauties. "It has more flat and tedious passages, and more ostentation of historical and antiquarian lore, but it has also greater richness and variety, both of character and incident, and if it has less sweetness and pathos in the softer passages, it has certainly more vehemence and force of colouring in the loftier and busier representations of action and emotion. . . more airiness and brightness in the higher delineations." Scott himself has acknowledged, in the preface of 1830, one of the chief defects of the story, although he endeavoured to justify it in a note. This was the combination of mean felony with so many noble qualities in the character of the hero, especially as the crime belonged rather to a commercial than a proud, warlike, and uneducated age. Leyden, amongst others, was furious at this

oversight, and Scott owns that it ought to have been remedied or palliated. "Yet I suffered the tree," he says, "to lie as it had fallen, being satisfied that corrections, however judicious, have a bad effect after publication."

The letters prefixed to each canto were also a mistake in an artistic point of view. Every one will agree with Southey in wishing them "at the end of the volume, or the beginning, anywhere except where they are," and the best advice we can give the reader is, not to allow them to interrupt his perusal of the poem, but to regard them as independent pieces. Indeed, it was in this character they were originally intended to appear, and as such were advertised under the title of "Six Epistles from Ettrick Forest." Of the persons to whom the letters are addressed a few notes may be interesting. Mr W. Stewart Rose was the author of "Letters from Rome," a translation of Ariosto, and other works—a genial, cultivated man, whose social qualities were higher than his literary powers. Scott not only met him frequently in London, but visited him at his marine villa, Gundimore, in Hampshire. The Rev. John Marriott was tutor to Lord Scott, the young heir of Buccleuch, to whom there is an allusion in the poem, and who died a few days after it was published. William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinnedder, was one of Scott's oldest and most valued friends. Lockhart describes very forcibly the difference in their character and temperament; Scott being strong, active, and passionately fond of rough bodily exercise, while Erskine was "a little man of feeble make, who seemed unhappy when his pony got beyond a foot pace . . . who used to shudder when he saw a party equipped for coursing, as if murder were in the wind. His small, elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, were the index of the quick, sensitive gentle spirit within. He had the warm heart of a woman, her generous enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses. A beautiful landscape, or a fine strain of music, would send the tears rolling down the cheek; and, though capable, I have no doubt, of exhibiting, had his duty called him to do so, the highest spirit of a hero or a martyr, he had very little command over his nerves amidst circumstances such as men of ordinary mould (to say nothing of iron fabrics like Scott's) regard with indifference." Slow advancement at the bar somewhat soured his temper, he shrank from general society, and moved only in a narrow circle of intimate friends. Thus retiring habit clung to him after he had obtained the long-coveted seat on the bench. He was at heart a generous, kindly man. His conversation, somewhat formal and precise, was rich in knowledge, and his taste and keen criticism were very valuable to his friend. Mr James Skene, of Rubislaw, near Aberdeen, was another early friend of Scott, who had encouraged him in his German studies, and shared his military enthusiasm in the days of the expected invasion. Scott speaks of him in one of his letters as "distinguished for his attainments as a draughtsman, and for his highly gentlemanlike feelings and character. Admirable in all exercises, there entered a good deal of the cavalier into his early character." Mr George Ellis is well known as the editor of a number of antiquarian works. He was a frequent correspondent and valued adviser of Scott. Richard Heber was brother of the Bishop and poet of the same name. He was long Member of Parliament for the University of Oxford, and a man of culture and social position. His knowledge of Middle Age literature and Border Minstrelsy were of great assistance to Scott in the compilation of the poem. Once, after a long convivial night in Edinburgh, he and Scott climbed to the top of Arthur's Seat in the moonlight, coming down to breakfast with a rare appetite.

The topography of "Marmion" is so fully illustrated in the notes, that it is scarcely needful here to do more than indicate them.—Norham Castle, p. 504, Lindisfarne, p. 510, Gifford Castle, p. 512, Crichton Castle, p. 514, the Borough



Moat, p. 515; Tantallon Castle, p. 517; Edinburgh Cross, p. 517. The route by which "Marmion" is carried to Edinburgh was made the subject of good natured banter by some of Scott's friends. "Why," said one of them, "did ever mortal coming from England to Edinburgh, pass by Gifford, Crichton Castle, Borthwick Castle, and over the top of Blackford Hill? Not only is it a circuitous *detour*, but there never was a road that way since the world was created." "That is a most irrelevant objection," replied Scott: "it was my good pleasure to bring Marmion by that route, for the purpose of describing the places you have mentioned, and the view from Blackford Hill—it was his business to find his road, and pick his steps the best way he could." In the poem, however, another route is suggested for the route chosen—

"There's a road that crosses the Lowlands, and  
 I—the Merse of course—were always  
 Who first saw the horse and the man of prey,  
 Hark at the clatter of the horse's way."

It was at the suggestion of the friend who offered the above criticism (Mr. Guthrie Wright) that Scott took his hero back by Tantallon.

# MARMION.

## INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

TO WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, Esq

*Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest*

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,  
November's leaf is red and scar.  
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,  
That hems our little garden in,  
Low in its dark and narrow glen,  
You scarce the rivulet might ken,  
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,  
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through  
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent  
seen

Through bush and brier, no longer green,  
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,  
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,  
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,  
Hurries its waters to the Tweed

No longer Autumn's glowing red  
Upon our Forest hills is shed,  
No more, beneath the evening beam,  
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam:  
Away hath passed the heather-bell  
That bloom'd so rich on Needpath Fell,  
Sallow his brow, and russet bare  
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.  
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,  
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,  
Where yet some faded herbage pines,  
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:  
In meek despondency they eye  
The wither'd sward and wintry sky,  
And far beneath their summer hill,  
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill.  
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,  
And wraps him closer from the cold,  
His dogs no merry circles wheel,  
But, shivering, follow at his heel;  
A cowering glance they often cast,  
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold and wild,  
As best befits the mountain child,  
Feel the sad influence of the hour,  
And wail the daisy's vanished flower;  
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,  
And anxious ask,—Will spring return,  
And birds and lambs again be gay,  
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes The daisy's flower  
Again shall paint your summer bower,  
Again the hawthorn shall supply  
The garland, you delight to tie,  
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,  
The wild birds carol to the round,  
And while you frolic light as they,  
Too short shall seem the summer day

To mute and to material things  
New life revolving summer brings;  
The genial call dead Nature hears,  
And in her glory reappears  
But oh! my Country's wintry state  
What second spring shall renovate?  
What powerful call shall bid arise  
The buried warlike and the wise;  
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,  
The hand that grasp'd the victor steel,  
The vernal sun new life bestows  
Even on the meanest flower that blows,  
But vainly, vainly may he shine,  
Where glory weeps o'er NELSON'S shrine,  
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,  
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallowed  
tomb!

Deep grav'd in every British heart,  
O never let those names depart!

Say to your song,—I o, here lies he grave,  
Who victor died on Grate wave;  
To him, as to the living hero,  
Short, bright, restless course was given  
Where'er his country's foes were found,  
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,  
Till burst the bolt on vaster shore,  
Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth,  
Who bade the conqueror go forth,  
And hunch'd that thunderbolt of war  
On Egypt, Habsburg, Trafalgar,  
Who, born to guide such high empire,  
For Britain's weal warily war'd,  
Able to whom the Almighty gave,  
For Britain's sake, an early grave!  
His worth, also, in his mightiest hour,  
A trouble held the pride of power,  
Spur'd at the sword he set on self,  
And served his Albion for herself;  
Who when the frantic crowd again  
Strain'd to subjection's burning rein,  
O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,  
The pride, he would not crush, re-train'd,  
Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,  
And brought the freeman's arm, to aid  
The freeman's laws.

Had'st thou but lived, though stripp'd  
Of power,  
A watchman on the lonely tower,  
This thrilling trumpet had roared the land,  
When fraud or danger were at hand;  
By thee, as by the beacon-light,  
Our pilots had kept course aright,  
As some proud column, though alone,  
Thy strength had propp'd the tottering  
throne:  
Now is the stately column broke,  
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,  
The trumpet's silver sound is still,  
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,  
When Death, just hovering, claim'd his  
prey,  
With palmure's unalter'd mood,  
Firm at his dangerous post he stood,

\* Nelson

† Copenhagen

Each call for needful rest he felt'd,  
With dying hand the rodder held  
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,  
The steeps of the realm gave way.  
Then, while on Britain's shores I pause,  
One undelated church remains,  
Where peaceful bells refer sent around  
The bloody toe's maddening sound,  
But still, upon the hallow'd day,  
Convolve the swains to praise and pray;  
While from an evil peace we fear,  
Grace this cold marble with a tear,—  
He, who preserv'd them, FATT, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,  
Bereave his rival chambers nigh,  
Nor be thy rest so dumb,  
Lost if he said o'er Fox's tomb,  
For eulogists mourn, untimely lost,  
When best employ'd, and wanted most,  
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,  
And wit that loved to play, not wound;  
And all the reasoning powers divine,  
To penetrate, resolve, combine,  
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—  
They sleep with him who sleeps below.  
And, if thou mourn'st they could not  
save

From error him who owns this grave,  
Be every harsher thought suppress'd,  
And sacred be the last long rest.  
*Here*, where the end of earthly things  
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;  
Where still the hand, and still the tongue,  
Of those who fought, and spoke, and  
sung;

*Here*, where the fretted ailes prolong  
The distant notes of holy song,  
As if some angel spoke agen,  
"All peace on earth, good will to men,"  
If ever from an English heart,  
O, *here* let prejudice depart,  
And, partial feeling cast aside,  
Record, that Fox a Briton died!  
When Europe crouch'd to France's yoke,  
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,  
And the firm Russian's purpose brave,  
Was harter'd by a timorous slave,  
Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,  
The sullied olive branch return'd,  
Stood for his country's glory fast,  
And nail'd her colours to the mast!

# MARMION.

## INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

TO WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, Esq

*Ashetel, Lattrick Forest*

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,  
November's leaf is red and sear -  
Late, gazing down the steepy inn,  
That hem's our little garden in,  
Low in its dark and narrow glen,  
You scarce the rivulet might ken,  
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,  
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through  
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent  
seen

Through bush and brier, no longer green,  
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,  
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,  
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,  
Hurries its waters to the Tweed

No longer Autumn's glowing red  
Upon our Forest hills is shed,  
No more, beneath the evening beam,  
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam  
Away hath passed the heather-bell  
That bloom'd so rich on Needpath Fell,  
Sallow his brow, and russet bare  
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.  
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,  
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,  
Where yet some faded herbage pines,  
And yet a watery sunbeam shines  
In meek despondency they eye  
The wither'd sward and wintry sky,  
And far beneath their summer hill,  
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill  
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,  
And wraps him closer from the cold;  
His dogs no merry circles wheel,  
But, shivering, follow at his heel,  
A cowering glance they often cast,  
As deeper mourns the gathering blast.

My umps, though hardy, bold and wild,  
As best befits the mountain child,  
Feel the sad influence of the hour,  
And wail the daisy's vanished flower,  
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,  
And anxious ask,—Will spring return,  
And birds and lambs again be gay,  
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes The daisy's flower  
Again shall paint your summer bower,  
Again the hawthorn shall supply  
The garlands you delight to tie,  
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,  
The wild birds carol to the round,  
And while you frolic light as they,  
Too short shall seem the summer day

To mute and to material things  
New life reviving summer brings,  
The genial call dead Nature hears,  
And in her glory reappears.  
But oh! my Country's wintry state  
What second spring shall renovate?  
What powerful call shall bid arise  
The burned warlike and the wise;  
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,  
The hand that grasp'd the victor steel?  
The vernal sun new life bestows  
Even on the meanest flower that blows  
But vainly, vainly may he shine,  
Where glory weeps o'er NELSON'S shrine,  
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,  
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallowed  
tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,  
O never let those names depart!

Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,  
Who victor died on Godite wave;\*  
To him, as to the burning bin,  
Short, bright, restless our e was given  
Where'er his country's foes were found,  
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,  
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,  
Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was no  
more.

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth,  
Who bade the conqueror go forth,  
And launch'd that thunderbolt of war  
On Egypt, Hagar, † Trafalgar;  
Who, born to guide such high empire,  
For Britain's weal was early wise,  
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,  
For Britain's sons, an early grave:  
His worth, who, in his native hour,  
A bubble held the pride of power,  
Spurn'd at the sordid lust of self,  
And served his Allmon for herself;  
Who, when the frantic crowd again  
Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,  
O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,  
The pride, he would not crush, restrain'd,  
Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,  
And brought the freeman's arm, to aid  
the freeman's law.

Had'st thou but lived, though stripp'd  
of power,  
A watchman on the lonely tower,  
Thy thrilling trumpet had roused the land,  
When fraud or danger were at hand;  
By thee, as by the beacon-light,  
Our pilots had kept course aright,  
As some proud column, though alone,  
Thy strength had propp'd the tottering  
throne.  
Now is the stately column broke,  
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,  
The trumpet's silver sound is still,  
The warder silent on the hull!

Oh think, how to his latest day,  
When Death, just hovering, claim'd his  
prey,  
With Palmyre's unalter'd mood,  
Firm at his dangerous post he stood,

\* Nelson.

† Copenhagen

Each all for itself re-rep'd,  
With up-held the tender hold,  
Till'd as the rearing way,  
The s-bled Britain's the and place,  
Then, ~~at the church remains,~~  
One upon the ~~the rest are and~~  
Whose peaceful bells ~~the rest are and~~  
The bloody waxen's madden ~~the rest are and~~  
But still, upon the hallow'd day,  
Convoke the swains to praise and pray,  
While faith and civil peace are dear,  
Grace this cold marble with a tear,—  
He, who preserved them, FITT, he here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,  
Because his rival slumbers nigh;  
Nor be thy requiescat dumb,  
Let it be said o'er Fox's tomb  
For talents mourn, untimely lost,  
When he t employ'd, and wanted most,  
Moan genius high, and lore profound,  
And wit that loved to play, not wound,  
And all the reasoning powers divine,  
To penetrate, resolve, combine,  
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—  
They sleep with him who sleeps below  
And, if thou mourn'st they could not  
save

From care him who owns this grave,  
Be every harsher thought suppress'd,  
And sacred be the last long rest  
Here, where the end of earthly things  
Lays heroes, patriots, hard, and kings,  
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,  
Of those who fought, and spoke, and  
sung;  
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong  
The distant notes of holy song,  
As if some angel spoke again,  
"All peace on earth, good-will to men,"  
If ever from an English heart,  
O, here let prejudice depart,  
And, partial feeling cast aside,  
Record, that Fox a Briton died!  
When Europe crouch'd to France's vol e,  
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,  
And the firm Russian's purpose brave,  
Was bristled by a timorous slave,  
Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,  
The sullied olive-branch return'd,  
Stood for his country's glory fast,  
And mail'd her colours to the mast!

## CANTO FIRST.

## The Castle.

— Norham's castled steep,  
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,  
And Cheviot's mountains lone  
The battled towers, the donjon keep,  
The loophole grates, where captives

weep,  
The flanking walls that round it sweep,  
In yellow lustre shone.

The warriors on the turrets high,  
Moving athwart the evening sky,  
Seem'd forms of giant height  
Their armour, as it caught the rays,  
Flash'd back again the western blaze,  
In lines of dazzling light.

## II

Saint George's banner, broad and gay,  
Now faded, as the fading ray

Less bright, and less, was flung;  
The evening gale had scarce the power  
To wave it on the Donjon Tower,  
So heavily it hung

The scouts had parted on their search,  
The Castle gates were barr'd,

Above the gloomy portal arch,  
Timing his footsteps to a march,

The Warder kept his guard,  
Low humming, as he paced along,  
Some ancient Border gathering song

## III.

A distant trampling sound he hears;  
He looks abroad and soon appears,  
O'er Horncliff-hill a plump\* of spears  
Beneath a pennon gay;

A horseman, darting from the crowd,  
Like lightning from a summer cloud,  
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,  
Before the dark array

Beneath the sable palisade,  
That closed the Castle barricade,

\* This word properly applies to a flight of water-fowl but is applied, by analogy, to a body of horse —

"There is a knight of the North Country,  
Which leads a lusty *plump* of spears." —  
*Flodden Field*

His bugle-horn he blew;  
The warder hasted from the wall,  
And warn'd the Captain in the hall,  
For well the blast he knew;  
And joyfully that knight did call,  
To sewer, squire, and seneschal

## IV.

"Now branch ye a pipe of Malvoisie,

Bring pasties of the doe,  
And quickly make the entrance free,  
And bid my heralds ready be,  
And every minstrel sound his glee,  
And all our trumpets blow;

And, from the platform, spare ye not  
To fire a noble salvo-shot,

Lord MARMION waits below!"

Then to the Castle's lower ward

Sped forty yeomen tall,  
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,  
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,  
The lofty palisade unspar'd,  
And let the draw bridge fall

## V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,  
Proudly his red-roan charger trode,  
His helm hung at the saddlebow,  
Well by his visage you might know  
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,  
And had in many a battle been,

The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd  
A token true of Bosworth field,  
His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,  
Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire  
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek  
Did deep design and counsel speak  
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,  
His thick mustache, and curly hair,  
Coal black, and grizzled here and there

But more through toil than age,  
His square-turn'd joints, and strength  
of limb,

Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,  
But in close fight a champion grim,  
In camps a leader sage.

## VI

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,  
In steel and plate of Milan steel;  
But his strong helm, of mighty cost,  
Was all with burn'd gold embroid;  
Amid the plumes of the crest,  
A falcon hew'd on her nest,  
With wings out prest, and forward  
breast.

Even such a falcon, on his shield,  
Seem'd able in an arm'd field;  
The golden bend bore aright,  
The chevron at the death is right.  
Blue was the charger's breast'd rein;  
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane;  
The lightly bore up's ample fold  
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

## VII

Behind him rode two gallant squire,  
Of noble name, and lightly squire,  
They burn'd the gilded spurs to chain,  
For well could each a war horse tame,  
Could draw the bow, the sword could  
sway.

And lightly bore the ring away;  
Nor less with courteous precepts stor'd,  
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,  
And frame love ditties passing rare,  
And sing them to a lady fair.

## VIII

Four men at arms came at their back,  
With halbert, bill, and battle axe -  
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so  
strong,

And led his sumpter-mules along,  
And ambling palfrey, when at need  
Him list'd ease his battle steed.  
The best and truest of the four,  
On high his fork pennon bore;  
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,  
Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,  
Where, blazon'd sable, as before,  
The towering falcon seem'd to soar  
Last, twenty yemen, two and two,  
In ho en black, and jerkins blue,  
With falcons brouder'd on each breast,  
Attended on their lord's behest -  
Each, chosen for an archer good,  
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood,

Each one a six-foot bow in his hand  
And six a cloth yard short stoly Land,  
Lash'd all a bow spear-tower,  
And at their belts their quiver,  
Their dusty palfreys, and array,  
Shew'd they had march'd a weary

## IX

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,  
How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,  
The soldiers of the guard,  
With music, pike, and morion,  
To welcome noble Marmion,  
Stood in the Castle-yard,  
Men-at-arms and trumpeters were there,  
The gunner led his livestock ware,  
For welcome, he prepared -  
Inter'd the train and such a change,  
As then through all his turret ring,  
Old Norham never heard

## X

The guards their morrice pikes advanced,  
The trumpets flourish'd brave,  
The cannon from the ramparts glanced,  
And thundering welcome gave  
A blithe salute, in martial sort,  
The minstrels well might sound,  
For, as Lord Marmion cross'd the court,  
He scatter'd angels round  
"Welcome to Norham, Marmion!  
Stout heart, and open hand!"  
Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,  
Thou flower of English land!"

## XI

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts deck,  
With silver scutcheon round their neck,  
Stood on the steps of stone,  
By which you reach the donjon gate,  
And there, with herald pomp and state,  
They hail'd Lord Marmion:  
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenay,  
Of Iutterward, and Scivelbaye,  
Of Tamworth tower and town;  
And he, their courtesy to requite,  
Gave them a chain of twelve marks  
weight,  
All as he lighted down.

night not sing or say,  
 ated meal a-day,  
 at in Durham aisle,  
 for our success the while.  
 orham vicar, woe betide,

too well in case to ride,

The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein  
 The wildest war-horse in your train,  
 But then, no spearman in the hall  
 Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl  
 Friar John of Tillmouth were the man  
 A blithesome brother at the can,  
 A welcome guest in hall and bower,  
 He knows each castle, town, and tower,  
 In which the wine and ale is good,  
 'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood  
 But that good man, as ill befalls,  
 Hath seldom left our castle walls,  
 Since, on the vigil of St Bede,  
 In evil hour, he cross'd the Tweed,  
 To teach Dame Alison her creed  
 Old Bughrig found him with his wife,  
 And John, an enemy to strife,  
 Suns frock and hood, fled for his life  
 The jealous churl hath deeply swore,  
 That, if again he venture o'er,  
 He shall shrieve penitent no more.  
 Little he loves such risks, I know,  
 Yet, in your guard, perchance will go "

## XXII

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,  
 Carved to his uncle and that lord,  
 And reverently took up the word —  
 "Kind uncle, woe were we each one,  
 If harm should hap to brother John  
 He is a man of mirthful speech,  
 Can many a game and gambol teach;  
 Full well at tables can he play,  
 And sweep it bowls the stake away.  
 None can a lustier carol bawl,  
 The needfulest among us all,  
 When time hangs heavy in the hall,  
 And snow comes thick at Christmas  
 tide,

And we can neither hunt, nor ride  
 A foray on the Scottish side  
 The vow'd revenge of Bughrig rude,  
 May end in worse than loss of hood  
 Let Friar John, in safety, still  
 In chimney-corner snore his fill,  
 Roast hissing crabs, or flansons swill

Last night, to Norham there came one,  
 Will better guide Lord Marmion."—  
 "Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay,  
 Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy  
 say."—

## XXIII.

"Here is a holy Palmer come,  
 From Salem first, and last from Rome  
 One, that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,  
 And visited each holy shrine,  
 In Araby and Palestine;  
 On hills of Armenie hath been,  
 Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;  
 By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,  
 Which parted at the prophet's rod;  
 In Sinai's wilderness he saw  
 The Mount, where Israel heard the law,  
 'Mid thunder-dint and flashing levin,  
 And shadows, mists, and darkness,  
 given.

He shows St James's cockle shell,  
 Of far Montserrat, too, can tell,  
 And of that Grot where Olives nod,  
 Where, darling of each heart and eye,  
 From all the youth of Sicily,  
 Saint Rosalie retired to God

## XXIV.

"To stout Saint George of Norwich  
 merry,  
 Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,  
 Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,  
 For his sins' pardon hath he pray'd  
 He knows the passes of the North,  
 And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;  
 Little he eats, and long will wake,  
 And drinks but of the stream or lake.  
 This were a guide o'er moor and dale,  
 But, when our John hath quaff'd his ale,  
 As little as the wind that blows,  
 And warms itself against his nose,  
 Kens he, or cares, which way he  
 goes"—

## XXV

"Gramercy!" quoth Lord Marmion,  
 "Full loath were I that Friar John,  
 That venerable man, for me  
 Were plac'd in fear or jeopardy.



If this same Palmer will me lead  
 From hence to Holy-Rood,  
 Like his good aunt, I'll pay his need,  
 Instead of cockle, shell or bead,  
 With angels' fair and good.  
 I love such holy riddlers; still  
 They know to charm a weary hill,  
 With songs, romance, or lay,  
 Some joyful tale, or glee, or jest,  
 Some lying legend, at the least,  
 They bring to cheer the way"—

## XXVI.

"Ah! noble sir," young Selby said,  
 And finger on his lip he laid,  
 "This man knows much—perchance  
 even more  
 Than he could learn by holy lore.  
 Still to himself he's muttering,  
 And shrinks at some unseen thing;  
 Last night we listen'd at his cell,  
 Strange sounds we heard, as if, sooth to  
 tell,  
 He murmur'd on till morn, how'er,  
 No living mortal could be near  
 Sometimes, I thought I heard it plain,  
 As other voices spoke again  
 I cannot tell—I like it not—  
 Fear John hath told us it is wrote,  
 No conscience clear, and void of wrong,  
 Can rest awake, and pry so long  
 Himself still sleeps before his beads,  
 Have mark'd ten aves, and two  
 creeds."—

## XXVII.

"Let pass," quoth Marmion, "by myself,  
 This man shall guide me on my way,  
 Although the great arch fiend and he  
 Had sworn themselves of company.  
 So please you, gentle youth, to call  
 This Palmer to the Castle-hall."  
 The summon'd Palmer came in place;  
 His sable cowl o'erhung his face;  
 In his black mantle was he clad,  
 With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,  
 On his broad shoulders wrought;  
 The scallop shell his cap did deck,  
 The crucifix around his neck  
 Was from Loreto brought;

ore;

The faded palm-branch in his hand  
 Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

## XXVIII

When as the Palmer came in hall,  
 Nor lord, nor knight, was there more  
 tall,  
 Or had a stately step withal.  
 Or look'd more high and keen,  
 For no relating did he want,  
 But strode across the hall of state,  
 And fronted Marmion where he sat,  
 As he his peer had been.  
 But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;  
 His cheek was sunk, alas the while!  
 And when he struggled at a smile,  
 His eye look'd faggard wild;  
 Poor wretch! the mother that him bore,  
 If she had been in presence there,  
 In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,  
 She had not known her child  
 Danger, long travel, want, or woe,  
 Soon change the form that best we  
 know—  
 For deathly fear can tune outgo,  
 And blanch at once the hair,  
 Hard toil can roughen form and face,  
 And want can quench the eye's bright  
 grace,  
 Nor does old age a wrinkle trace  
 More deeply than despair.  
 Happy whom none of these befall,  
 But this poor Palmer I new them all.

## XXIX

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask,  
 The Palmer took on him the task,  
 So he would march with morning tide,  
 To Scottish court to be his guide  
 "But I have solemn vows to pry,  
 And may not linger by the way,  
 To fair St Andrews bound,  
 Within the ocean cave to pray,  
 Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,  
 From midnight to the dawn of day,  
 Sung to the billows' sound,  
 Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,  
 Whose spring can frenzied dreams  
 dispel,

F

## MARMION

And the crazed brain restore  
 Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring  
 Could back to peace my bosom bring,  
 Or bid it throb no more !"

XXX

And now the midnight draught of sleep,  
 Where wine and spices richly steep,  
 In massive bowl of silver deep,  
 The page presents on knee

Lord Marmion drink a fur good rest,  
 The Capt'n pledged his noble guest,  
 The cup went through among the rest,  
 Who drained it merrily,

Alone the Palmer press'd it by,  
 Though Selby press'd him courteously.  
 This was a sign the feast was o'er,  
 It hush'd the merry wassel roar,  
 The minstrels ceased to sound  
 Soon in the castle nought was heard,  
 But the slow footstep of the guard,  
 Pacing his sober round

XXXX

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose :  
 And first the chapel doors unclose,

Then, after morning rites were done,  
 (A hasty mass from Friar John,)  
 And knight and squire had broke their  
 fast

On rich substantial repast,  
 Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse  
 Then came the stirrup cup in course  
 Between the Baron and his host,  
 No point of courtesy was lost ;  
 High thanks were by Lord Marmion  
 paid,

Solemn excuse the Captain made,  
 Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd  
 That noble train, their Lord th'  
 last

Then loudly rung the trumpet call,  
 Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,  
 And shook the Scottish shore :  
 Around the castle eddied slow,  
 Volumes of smoke as white as snow,  
 And hid its turrets hoar ;  
 Till they roll'd forth upon the air,  
 And met the river breezes there,  
 Which gave again the prospect fair.

## INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND.

TO THE REV JOHN MARRIOTT, A M

*Ashestiel, Elttrick Forest*

THE scenes are desert now, and bare,  
 Where flourish'd once a forest fair,  
 When these waste glens with copse  
 were lined,

And peopled with the hart and hind.  
 Yon Thorn—perchance whose prickly  
 spears

Have fenced him for three hundred  
 years,

While fell around his green compeers—  
 Yon lonely Thorn, would he could tell  
 The changes of his parent bough,  
 Since he, so grey and stubborn now,  
 Waved in each breeze a sapling bough  
 Would he could tell how deep the shade  
 A thousand mingled branches made,  
 How broad the shadow of the oak,  
 How clung the rowan\* to the rock,

\* Mountain ash.

And through the foliage show'd his head,  
 With narrow leaves and berries red,  
 What pines on every mountain sprung,  
 O'er every dell what birches hung,  
 In every breeze what aspens shook,  
 What alders shaded every brook !

"Here, in my shade," methinks he'd say  
 "The mighty stag at noon-tide lay.  
 The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,  
 (The neighbouring dingle bears his  
 name.)

With lurching step around me prowled  
 And stop, against the moon to howl  
 The mountain-boar, on battle set,  
 His tusks upon my stem would whet ;  
 While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,  
 Have bounded by, through gay green  
 wood.

Then off, from Newark's river tower,  
Saluted a Scott's sh-monarch's power.  
A thousand was its muster'd round,  
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and sound;

And I might see the youth intent,  
Guard every pass with crossbow bent,  
And through the brake the rangers  
stall.

And fild'ners hold the ready hawk;  
And foresters in green wood trim,  
Lead in the leash the partridge and grim,  
Attentive to the bratchet's bay,  
From the dark covert drove the prey,  
To slip them as he bridle away.  
The startled quarry bounds amain,  
As fast the gallant greyhounds train;  
Whistles the arrow from the bow,  
Answers the harquebuss below;  
While all the rocking hills reply,  
To hoof-clang, bound, and hunters' cry,  
And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Of such proud huntings, many tales  
Yet linger in our lonely dales,  
Up pathless, Litnick, and on Yarrow,  
Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow.  
But not more blithe that silver court,  
Than we have been at humbler sport,  
Though small our pomp, and mean our  
grime.

Our mirth, dear Marriott, was the same.  
Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?  
O'erholt or hull there never flew,  
From slip or leash there never sprang,  
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang  
Nor dull, between each merry chase,  
Paced by the intermitted space;  
For we had fair resource in store,  
In Classic and in Gothic lore.

We mark'd each memorable scene,  
And held poetic talk between;  
Nor hull, nor brook, we paced along,  
But had its legend or its song.  
All silent now—for now are still  
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!†  
No longer, from thy mountains dun,  
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,  
And while his honest heart glows warm,  
At thought of his paternal farm,

\* Slowhound

† A seat of the Duke of Buccleuch in Litnick forest.

Round to his mate's a brimmer fills,  
And drinks, "The Chieftain of the  
Hills!"

No fury form, in Yarrow's bowers,  
Trip o'er the walks, or tread the flowers,  
Far as the elves whom Janet saw  
By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh;  
No youthful Baron's left to grace  
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,  
And apt, in manly step and tone,  
The majesty of Oberon.  
And she is gone, whose lovely face  
Is but her least and loveliest grace,  
Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given  
To show our earth the charms of  
Heaven,

She could not glide along the air,  
With form more light, or face more fair.  
No more the widow's deserted ear  
Grows quick that lady's step to hear.  
At midnight she expects her not,  
Nor lures her to trim the cot.  
Pensive she turns her humming wheel,  
Or pensive cools her orphans' meal,  
Yet blesses ere she deals their bread,  
The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair,—which hills so closely  
bind,  
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,  
Though much he fret, and chafe, and  
toil,

Till all his eddying currents boil,—  
Her long descended lord is gone,  
And left us by the stream alone  
And much I miss those sportive boys,  
Companions of my mountain joys,  
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,  
When thought is speech, and speech is  
truth.

Close to my side, with what delight  
They press'd to hear of Wallace wight,  
When, pointing to his airy mound,  
I call'd his ramparts holy ground!†  
Kindled their brows to hear me speak;  
And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,

\* Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, and mother of the present Duke, was at the date of the poem Countess of Dalkeith. She was much given to works of charity and spent a great deal of time when she resided at Bowood in visiting the poor of the neighbourhood.

† On a high mountainous ridge above the farm of Ashetiel is a fosse called Wallace's Trench.

Despite the difference of our years,  
Return again the glow of theirs  
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,  
They will not, cannot, long endure,  
Condemn'd to stem the world's rude  
tide,

You may not linger by the side,  
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,  
And Passion ply the sail and oar  
Yet cherish the remembrance still,  
Of the lone mountain, and the rill;  
For trust, dear boys, the time will come,  
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,  
And you will think right frequently,  
But, well I hope, without a sigh,  
On the free hours that we have spent  
Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions gone,  
We doubly feel ourselves alone,  
Something, my friend, we yet may gain;  
There is a pleasure in this pain.  
It soothes the love of lonely rest,  
Deep in each gentler heart impress'd  
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,  
And stifled soon by mental broils;  
But, in a bosom thus prepared,  
Its still small voice is often heard,  
Whispering a mingled sentiment,  
'Twixt resignation and content.  
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,  
By lone Saint Mary's silent lake.  
Thou know'st it well,—nor sen, nor  
sedge.

Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge,  
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink  
At once upon the level brink;  
And just a trace of silver sand  
Marks where the water meets the land  
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,  
Each hill's huge outline you may view:  
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,  
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brike, is there,  
Save where, of land, yon slender line  
Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine  
Yet even this nakedness has power,  
And adds the feeling of the hour:  
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,  
Where living thing concealed might lie,  
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,  
Where swan, or woodman lone, might  
dwell;

There's nothing left to fancy's guess,  
You see that all is loneliness:  
And silence aids—though the steep hills  
Send to the lake a thousand rills;  
In summer tide, so soft they weep,  
The sound but lulls the ear asleep,  
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,  
So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,  
But well I ween the dead are near;  
For though, in feudal strife, a foe  
Hath lain Our Lady's chapel low,  
Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,  
The peasant rests him from his toil,  
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,  
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd

If age had tamed the passions' strife,  
And fate had cut my ties to life,  
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to  
dwell,

And rear again the chaplain's cell,  
Like that same peaceful hermitage,  
Where Milton long'd to spend his age  
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day  
On Bourhope's lonely top decay;  
And, as it faint and feeble died  
On the broad lake, and mountain's side,  
To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;  
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,  
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey;"  
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tower,  
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower  
And when that mountain-sound I heard,  
Which bids us be for storm prepared,  
The distant rustling of his wings,  
As up his force the Tempest brings,  
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,  
To sit upon the Wizard's grave—  
That Wizard-Priest's, whose bones are  
thrust

From company of holy dust;  
On which no sunbeam ever shines—  
(So superstition's creed divines)—  
Thence view the lake, with sullen roar,  
Heave her broad billows to the shore,  
And mark the wild swans mount the  
gale,  
Spread wide through mist their snowy  
sail,

And ever stoop again, to lave  
Their bosoms on the surging wave.

Then, when against the driving hail  
No longer might my plaid avail,  
Back to my lonely home retire,  
And light my lamp, and trim my fire ;  
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,  
Till the wild tale had all its sway,  
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,  
I heard unearthly voices speak,  
And thought the Wizard-Priest was  
come,

To claim again his ancient home !  
And bide my busy fancy range,  
To frame him a fitting shape and strong,  
Till from the task my brow I clear'd  
And smiled to think that I had fear'd

But chief, 'twere sweet to think such  
life,  
(Though but escape from fortune's strife.)  
Something most matchless good and  
wise,

A great and grateful sacrifice,  
And deem each hour, to musing given,  
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,  
Such peaceful solitudes displease,  
He loves to drown his bosom's jar  
Amid the elemental war :  
And my black Palmer's choice had been  
Some ruder and more savage scene,

Like that which frowns round dark  
Loch Lene

There eagles scream from isle to shore,  
Down all the rocks the torrents roar,  
O'er the black waves incessant driven,  
Dark mists infect the summer heaven,  
Through the rude barriers of the lake  
Away it hurries, its waters break,  
Faster and whiter dash and curl,  
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.  
Rises the fog smoke white as snow,  
Thunders the viewless stream below,  
Diving, as if condemn'd to live  
Some demon's subterranean cave,  
Who, prison'd by enchantment's spell,  
Shakes the dark rock with groan and  
yell.

And well that Palmer's form and mien  
Had suited with the stormy scene,  
Just on the edge, straining his ken  
To view the bottom of the den,  
Where, deep deep down, and far within,  
Took with the rocks the roaring linn ;  
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,  
And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,  
White as the snowy charger's tail  
Drive down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriott, thy harp, on Isis strung,  
To many a Border theme has rung :  
Then list to me, and thou shalt know  
Of this mysterious Mah of Woe.

## CANTO SECOND

### The Content.

#### I.

THE breeze, which swept away the  
smoke,

Round Norham Castle roll'd,  
When all the loud artillery spoke,  
With lightning-flash, and thunder stroke,  
As Marmion left the Hold.

It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,  
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,  
It froshly blew, and strong,

Where, from high Whutby's cloister'd  
pile,

Bound to St Cuthbert's Holy Isle,  
It bore a bark along

Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,  
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,  
As she were danc'ing home ;  
The merry seamen laugh'd, to see  
Their gallant ship so lustily  
Furrow the green sea-foam.  
Much joy'd they in their honour'd  
freight ;  
For, on the deck, in chair of state,  
The Abbess of Saint Hilda plac'd,  
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

#### II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,  
Like birds escaped to greenwood shades,

Their first flight from the cage,  
 How timid, and how curious too,  
 For all to them was strange and new,  
 And all the common sights they view,  
 Their wonderment engage  
 One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,  
 With many a benedicite,  
 One at the rippling surge grew pale,  
 And would for terror pray;  
 Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog, nigh,  
 His round black head, and sparkling eye,  
 Rear'd o'er the foaming spray,  
 And one would still adjust her veil,  
 Disorder'd by the summer gale,  
 Perchance lest some more worldly eye  
 Her dedicated charms might spy;  
 Perchance, because such action graced  
 Her fair-turn'd arm and slender waist  
 Light was each simple bosom there,  
 Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—  
 The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

## III

The Abbess was of noble blood,  
 But early took the veil and hood,  
 Ere upon life she cast a look,  
 Or knew the world that she forsook.  
 Fair too she was, and kind had been  
 As she was fair, but ne'er had seen  
 For her a timid lover sigh,  
 Nor knew the influence of her eye.  
 Love, to her ear, was but a name,  
 Combined with vanity and shame;  
 Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all  
 Bounded within the cloister wall:  
 The deadliest sin her mind could reach,  
 Was of monastic rule the breach;  
 And her ambition's highest aim  
 To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.  
 For this she gave her ample dower,  
 To raise the convent's eastern tower,  
 For this, with carving rare and quaint,  
 She deck'd the chapel of the saint,  
 And gave the relic-shrine of cost,  
 With ivory and gems emboss'd  
 The poor her Convent's bounty blest,  
 The pilgrim in its halls found rest

## IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule  
 Reform'd on Benedictine school;

Her cheek was pale, her form was spare,  
 Vigils, and penitence austere,  
 Had early quench'd the light of youth,  
 But gentle was the dame, in sooth;  
 Though vain of her religious sway,  
 She loved to see her maids obey;  
 Yet nothing stern was she in cell,  
 And the nuns loved their Abbess well.  
 Sad was this voyage to the dame,  
 Summon'd to Lindisfarne, she came,  
 There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,  
 And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold  
 A chapter of Saint Benedict,  
 For inquisition stern and strict,  
 On two apostates from the faith,  
 And, if need were, to doom to death

## V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,  
 Save this, that she was young and fair,  
 As yet a novice unprofess'd,  
 Lovely and gentle, but distress'd  
 She was betroth'd to one now dead,  
 Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.  
 Her kinsmen bade her give her hand  
 To one, who loved her for her land.  
 Herself, almost heart-broken now,  
 Was bent to take the vestal vow,  
 And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,  
 Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom

## VI

She sat upon the galley's prow,  
 And seem'd to mark the waves below;  
 Nay, seem'd, so fix'd her look and eye,  
 To count them as they glided by  
 She saw them not—'twas seeming all—  
 Far other scene her thoughts recall,—  
 A sun-scorch'd desert, waste and bare,  
 Nor waves, nor breezes, murmur'd there,  
 There saw she, where some careless  
 hand  
 O'er a dead corpse had heap'd the sand,  
 To hide it till the jackals come,  
 To tear it from the scanty tomb—  
 See what a woful look was given,  
 As she rous'd up her eyes to heaven!

## VII

Lovely, and gentle, and distress'd—  
 These charms might tame the fiercest  
 breast;

Harpers have sung, and poets told,  
That he, in fury uncontroll'd,  
The savage nature of the wood,  
Purs'd a virgin, fair and good,  
Both pacific and his savage mood  
But passions in the human frame  
Oft put the lion's rage to shame;  
And jealousy, his dark intrigue,  
With sordid avrice in league,  
Had practis'd with their bow and knife,  
Against the mother's harmless life  
This crime was charged 'gainst the  
who lay  
Prison'd in Cuthbert's wet grey.

## VIII

And now the vessel skirts the strand  
Of mountainous Northumberland;  
To ens, towers, and halls, successive rise,  
And catch the nans' delighted eyes  
Moak, Wearmouth soon behind them lay,  
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;  
They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall  
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;  
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck  
floods  
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;  
They press'd the tower of Widderington,  
Mother of many a valiant son,  
At Coquet isle their beads they tell  
To the good Saint who own'd the cell;  
Then did the Alne attention claim,  
And Warleworth, proud of Percy's  
name,  
And next, they cross'd themselves, to  
hear  
The whitening breakers sound so near,  
Where, boiling through the rocks, they  
roar  
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore;  
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd  
they there,  
King Ida's castle, huge and square,  
From its tall rock look grimly down,  
And on the swelling ocean frown;  
Then from the coast they bore away,  
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay

## IX

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,  
And girdled in the Saint's domain

For, with the sea at Lidd, its style  
Varies from continent to isle;  
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,  
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;  
Twice every day, the waves efface  
Of stones and sandill'd feet the trace.  
As to the port the galley flew,  
By her and higher row to view  
The Castle with its battled walls,  
The ancient Monastery's halls,  
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,  
Placed on the margin of the isle.

## X.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frown'd,  
With massive arches broad and round,  
That rose alternate, row and row,  
On ponderous columns, short and low,  
Bait ere the art was known,  
By pointed aisle, and shafted stall,  
The arches of an alley'd walk  
To emulate in stone  
On the deep walls, the heathen Done  
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain;  
And needful was such strength to these,  
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,  
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,  
Open to rovers fierce as they,  
Which could twelve hundred years  
withstand  
Winds, waves, and northern pirates'  
hand.  
Not but that portions of the pile,  
Rebuilded in a later style,  
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had  
been,  
Not but the wasting sea breeze keen  
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,  
And moulder'd in his niche the saint,  
And rounded, with consuming power,  
The pointed angles of each tower,  
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,  
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

## XI.

Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,  
The maidens rais'd Saint Hilda's song,  
And with the sea-wave and the wind,  
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,  
And made harmonious close;  
Then, answering from the sandy shore,  
Half-drown'd amid the breakers' roar,  
According chorus rose:

Down to the haven of the Isle,  
The monks and nuns in order file,  
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim;  
Banner, and cross, and relics there,  
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bore,  
And, as they caught the sounds on air,  
They echoed back the hymn  
The islanders, in joyous mood,  
Rush'd emulously through the flood,  
To hale the bark to land,  
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,  
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,  
And bless'd them with her hand

## XII

Suppose we now the welcome said,  
Suppose the Convent banquet made  
All through the holy dome,  
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,  
Wherever vestal maid might pry,  
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,  
The stranger sisters roam  
Till fell the evening damp with dew,  
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,  
For there, even summer night is chill  
Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill,  
They closed around the fire,  
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint  
The rival merits of their saint,  
A theme that ne'er can tire  
A holy maid; for, be it known,  
That their saint's honour is their own

## XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,  
How to their house three Barons bold  
Must menial service do;  
While horns blow out a note of shame,  
And monks cry "Fye upon your name!"  
In wrath, for loss of silken game,  
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew—"—  
"This, on Ascension-day, each year,  
While labouring on our harbour-pier,  
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy  
hear"—  
They told, how in their convent-cell  
A Saxon princess once did dwell,  
The lovely Edelfled  
And how, of thousand snakes, each one  
Was changed into a coil of stone,  
When holy Hilda pray'd,

Themselves, within their holy bound,  
Their stony folds had often found  
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,  
As over Whitby's towers they sail,  
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,  
They do their homage to the saint.

## XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail  
To vie with these in holy tale;  
His body's resting-place of old,  
How oft their patron changed, they told;  
How, when the rude Dane burn'd their  
pile,  
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle,  
O'er northern mountain, marsh, and  
moor,  
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,  
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse  
they bore.

They rested them in fair Melrose;  
But though, alive, he loved it well  
Not there his relics might repose,  
For, wondrous tale to tell!  
In his stone-coffin forth he rides,  
A ponderous bark for river tides,  
Yet light as gossamer it glides,  
Downward to Tilmouth cell  
Nor long was his abiding there,  
For southward did the saint repair;  
Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw  
His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw  
Hail'd him with joy and fear,  
And, after many wanderings past,  
He chose his lordly seat at last,  
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,  
Looks down upon the Wear:  
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade  
His relics are in secret laid;  
But none may know the place,  
Save of his holiest servants three,  
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,  
Who share that wondrous grace.

## XV

Who may his miracles declare!  
Even Scotland's dauntless king, and he  
(Although with them they led  
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,  
And Lodon's knights, all sheathed  
in mail,  
And the bold men of Teviotdale,  
Before his standard fled



'Twas he, to smite his reign,  
Edged Alfre's scolden on the Dane,  
And turn'd the Conqueror back again,  
When, with his Norman bowyer band,  
He came to waste Northumberland

## XVI

But sin Saint Hilda's nuns would learn  
If, on a rock, by Landisfarne,  
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame  
The sea-born legends that bear his name -  
Such tales had Whithy's fishers told,  
And said they might his shape behold,  
And hear his awful sound;  
A deaden'd clane, — a huge dim form,  
Seen but, and heard, when gathering  
storm

And night were closing round.  
But this, as tale of idle fame,  
The nuns of Landisfarne disclaim

## XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,  
Far different was the scene of woe,  
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,  
Council was held of life and death  
It was more dark and lone that vault,  
Than the worst dungeon cell -  
Old Colwulf built it, for his fault,  
In penitence to dwell,  
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down  
The Saxon battle-axe and crown  
This den, which, chilling every sense  
Of feeling, hearing, sight,  
Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,  
Excluding air and light,  
Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made  
A place of burial for such dead,  
As, having died in mortal sin,  
Might not be laid the church within.  
'Twas now a place of punishment;  
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,  
As reach'd the upper air,  
The hearers bless'd themselves, and said,  
The spirits of the sinful dead  
Bemoan'd their torments there.

## XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,  
Did of this penitential aisle

Some vague tradition go,  
Few only, save the Abbot, knew  
Where the place lay; and still more few  
Were those, who had from him the clew  
To that dread vault to go  
Victim and executioner  
Were blindfold when transported there  
In low dark rounds the arches hung,  
From the rude rock the side-walls  
sprung;

The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,  
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,  
Were all the pavement of the floor,  
The mildew drops fell one by one,  
With tinkling plash upon the stone.  
A cre set,\* in an iron chain,  
Which served to light this drear domain,  
With damp and darkness seemed to strive,  
As if it scarce might keep alive,  
And yet it dimly served to show  
The awful conclave met below.

## XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,  
Were placed the heads of convents three -  
All servants of Saint Benedict,  
The statutes of whose order strict

On iron table lay;  
In long black dress, on seats of stone,  
Behind were these three judges shown  
By the pale cresset's ray:

The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,  
Sat for a space with visage bare,  
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,  
And tear-drops that for pity fell,  
She closely drew her veil -

Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,  
By her proud mien and flowing dress,  
Is Gynemouth's haughty Prioress,  
And she with awe looks pale -

And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight  
Has long been quenched by age's night,  
Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,  
Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace is shown,

Whose look is hard and stern, —  
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;  
For sanctity call'd, through the aisle,  
The Saint of Landisfarne

## XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair,  
But, though an equal fate they share,

\* Antique chandelier.

Yet one alone deserves our care  
 Her sex a page's dress belied ;  
 The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,  
 Obscured her charms, but could not hide  
 Her cap down o'er her face she drew ,  
 And, on her doublet breast,  
 She tried to hide the badge of blue,  
 Lord Marmion's falcon crest  
 But, at the Prioress' command,  
 A monk undid the silken band,  
 That tied her tresses fair,  
 And raised the bonnet from her head,  
 And down her slender form they spread,  
 In ringlets rich and rare  
 Constance de Beverley they know,  
 Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,  
 Whom the church numbered with the  
 dead,  
 For broken vows, and convent fled.

## XXI

When thus her face was given to view,  
 (Although so pallid was her hue,  
 It did a ghastly contrast bear  
 To those bright ringlets glistening fair,)  
 Her look composed, and steady eye,  
 Bespoke a matchless constancy ;  
 And there she stood so calm and pale,  
 That, but her breathing did not fail,  
 And motion slight of eye and head,  
 And of her bosom, warranted  
 That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,  
 You might have thought a form of wax,  
 Wrought to the very life, was there ;  
 So still she was, so pale, so fair.

## XXII

Her comrade was a sordid soul,  
 Such as does murder for a meed ;  
 Who, but of fear, knows no control,  
 Because his conscience, scar'd and foul,  
 Feels not the import of his deed ,  
 One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires  
 Beyond his own more brute desires  
 Such tools the Tempter ever needs,  
 To do the savagest of deeds ,  
 For them no vision'd terrors daunt,  
 Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,  
 One fear with them, of all most base,  
 The fear of death,—alone finds place.  
 This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,  
 And shamed not loud to moan and howl,

His body on the floor to dash,  
 And crouch, like hound beneath the  
 lash ,  
 While his mute partner, standing near,  
 Waited her doom without a tear.

## XXIII

Yet well the luckless wretch might  
 shriek,  
 Well might her paleness terror speak !  
 For there were seen in that dark wall,  
 Two niches, narrow, deep and tall, —  
 Who enters at such grisly door,  
 Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.  
 In each a slender meal was laid,  
 Of roots, of water, and of bread :  
 By each, in Benedictine dress,  
 Two haggard monks stood motionless ;  
 Who, holding high a blazing torch,  
 Show'd the grim entrance of the porch  
 Reflecting back the smoky beam,  
 The dark-red walls and arches gleam  
 Hewn stones and cement were display'd,  
 And building tools in order laid.

## XXIV.

These executioners were chose,  
 As men who were with mankind foes,  
 And with despite and envy fired,  
 Into the cloister had retired ;  
 Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,  
 Strove, by deep penance, to efface  
 Of some foul crime the stain ;  
 For, as the vassals of her will,  
 Such men the Church selected still,  
 As either joy'd in doing ill,  
 Or thought more grace to gain,  
 If, in her cause, they wrestled down  
 Feelings their nature strove to own  
 By strange device were they brought  
 there,  
 They knew not how, nor knew not  
 where.

## XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,  
 To speak the Chapter's doom,  
 On those the wall was to enclose,  
 Alive, within the tomb ,  
 But stopp'd, because that woful Maid,  
 Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd  
 Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain,  
 Her accents might no utterance gain ,

Sought but imperfect murmurs slip  
From her convuls'd and quivering lip,  
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,  
You seem'd to hear a distant rill.—  
'Twas ocean's swells and falls;  
For though this vault of sin and fear  
Was to the sounding surge a rear,  
A tempest there you scarce could hear  
So massive were the walls

## XXVI

At length, an effort sent apart  
The blood that cirdled to her heart,  
And light came to her eye,  
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,  
And hectic and a flatter'd cheek,  
Like that left on the Cheviot peak,  
By Autumn's stormy sky,  
And when her silence broke at length,  
Still as she spoke she gathered strength,  
And arm'd herself to bear  
It was a fearful sight to see  
Such high resolve and constancy,  
In form so soft and fair

## XXVII.

'I speak not to implore your grace,  
Well I know I, for one minute's space  
Successful might I sue.  
For do I speak your prayers to gain  
For if a death of lingering pain,  
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,  
Vain are your masses too—  
Listen'd to a traitor's tale,  
Left the convent and the veil;  
For three long years I bow'd my pride,  
A horse-boy in his train to ride,  
And well my folly's meed he gave,  
Who forsak'd, to be his slave,  
All here, and all beyond the grave—  
He saw young Clara's face more fair,  
He knew her of broad lands the heir,  
Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,  
And Constance was beloved no more.—  
'Tis an old tale, and often told;  
But did my fate and wish agree,  
Ne'er had been read, in story old,  
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,  
That loved, or was avenged, like  
me

## XXVIII

"The King approved his favourite's aim;  
In vain a rival barr'd his claim,  
Whose fate with Clere's was plight,  
For he attain'd that rival's fame  
With treason's charge—and on the  
came,  
In mortal lists to fight  
Their oaths are ead,  
Their prayers are pray'd,  
Their lances in the rest are laid,  
They meet in mortal shock;  
And, hark! the throng, with thundering  
cry,  
Shout 'Marmion! Marmion! to the sky,  
De Wilton to the block!'—  
Say ye, who preach Heaven shall decide  
When in the lists two champions ride,  
Say, was Heaven's justice here?  
When, loyal in his love and faith,  
Wilton found overthrow or death,  
Beneath a traitor's spear?  
How false the charge, how true he fell,  
This guilty packet best can tell"—  
Then drew a packet from her breast,  
Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the  
rest—

## XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid,  
To Whithy's convent fled the maid,  
The hated match to shun  
'Ho! shifts she thus?' King Henry  
cried,  
'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,  
If she were sworn a nun'  
Oneway remain'd—the King's command  
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land.  
I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd  
For Clara and for me—  
This crafty Monk, for gold, did swear,  
He would to Whithy's shrine repair,  
And, by his drugs, my rival fair  
A saint in heaven should be  
But ill the dastard kept his oath,  
Whose towardice has undone us both

## XXX

"And now my tongue thy secret tells,  
Not that remorse my bosom swells,  
But to assure my soul that none  
Shall ever wed with Marmion.

Oft on the trampling band, from crown  
Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down,  
On wing of jet, from his repose  
In the deep hearth, the black-cock rose;  
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,  
Nor waited for the bending bow,  
And when the stony path began,  
By which the naked peak they wan,  
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan  
The noon had long been pass'd before  
They gain'd the height of Lammermoor,  
Thence winding down the northern way,  
Before them, at the close of day,  
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay

## II.

No summons calls them to the tower,  
To spend the hospitable hour  
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone,  
His cautious dame, in bower alone,  
Dreaded her castle to unclose,  
So late, to unknown friends or foes,  
On through the hamlet as they paced,  
Before a porch, whose front was graced  
With bush and flagon trimly placed,

Lord Marmion drew his rein:  
The village inn seem'd large, though  
rude;

Its cheerful fire and hearty food

Might well relieve his train  
Down from their seats the horsemen  
sprung,

With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;  
They bind their horses to the stall,  
For forage, food, and firing call,  
And various clamour fills the hall  
Weighing the labour with the cost,  
Toils everywhere the bustling host

## III

Soon by the chimney's merry blaze,  
Through the rude hostel might you  
gaze,

Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,  
The rafters of the sooty roof

Bore wealth of winter cheer;  
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,  
And gammons of the tusked boar,  
And savoury haunch of deer.

The chimney arch projected wide,  
Above, around it, and beside,

Were tools for housewives' hand,  
Nor wanted, in that martial day,  
The implements of Scottish fray,  
The buckler, lance, and brand.  
Beneath its shroud, the place of state,  
On oaken settle Marmion sat,  
And view'd around the blazing hearth  
His followers mix in noisy mirth;  
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,  
From ancient vessels ranged aside,  
Full actively their host supplied.

## IV

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,  
And laughter theirs at little jest;  
And oft Lord Marmion deigned to aid,  
And mingle in the mirth they made;  
For though, with men of high degree,  
The proudest of the proud was he,  
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art  
To win the soldier's hardy heart.  
They love a captain to obey,  
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May  
With open hand, and brow as free,  
Lover of wine and minstrelsy,  
Ever the first to scale a tower,  
As venturesous in a lady's bower —  
Such buxom chief shall lead his host  
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

## V

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,  
Right opposite the Palmer stood,  
His thin dark visage seen but half,  
Half hidden by his hood.  
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,  
Which he, who ill such gaze could  
brook,

Strove by a frown to quell;  
But not for that, though more than once  
Full met their stern encountering glance,  
The Palmer's visage fell.

## VI

By fits less frequent from the crowd  
Was heard the burst of laughter loud,  
For still, as squire and archer stared  
On that dark face and matted beard,  
Their glee and game declined  
All grazed at length in silence drear,  
Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear  
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,  
Thus whisper'd forth his mind —

"Saint Mary" saw at the peer's such sight?  
How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,  
Where'er the fire brand's flickle light  
Glances beneath he could!  
Full on our Lord he sets his eye;  
For his best palfrey, "would not I  
In lure that sul or scowl."

## VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe  
Which thus had quell'd their hearts, set o

The ever-varying fire-light shew  
That figure stern and face of woe,  
Now cull'd up a spirit:—  
"Fitz-Lustace, I now set thou at some bay,  
To speed the lingering night away."  
We slumber by the fire."

## VIII

"So please you," thus the youth rejoind,  
"Our choices' minstrel's left behind  
Ill may we hope to please your ear,  
Accustom'd Constant's strains to hear  
The harp full softly can he strike,  
And wake the lover's lute alike;  
To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush  
Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,  
No nightingale her love-lorn tune  
More sweetly warbles to the moon  
Woe to the cause, whatever it be,  
Detains from us his melody,  
Lay'd hid on rocks, and billows stein,  
Or duller morns of Lindisfarne  
Now must I venture, as I may  
To sing his favourite roundelay."

## IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Lustace had,  
The air he chose was wild and sad,  
Such have I heard, in Scottish land,  
Rise from the busy harvest band,  
When falls before the mountaineer,  
On Lowland plains, the ripen'd ear  
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,  
Now a wild chorus swells the song.  
Oft have I listen'd, and stood still,  
As it came soften'd up the hill,  
And deem'd it the lament of men  
Who languish'd for their native glen,  
And thought how sad would be such  
sound  
On Busquehana's swampy ground,

Kentucky's wood-cucumber'd brake,  
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,  
Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,  
Recall'd far Scotland's hills again.

## X

## Song.

Where shall the lover rest,  
Whom the fates sever  
From his true maiden's breast,  
Parted for ever?  
Where, through groves deep and high,  
Sounds the fir lullow,  
Where early violets die,  
Under the willow

## CHORUS

*Ellenore, &c.* Soft shall be his pillow  
There, through the summer day,  
Cool streams are laving,  
There, while the tempests sway,  
Scarcely are boughs waving,  
There, thy rest shall thou take,  
Parted for ever,  
Never again to vade,  
Never, O never!

## CHORUS

*Ellenore, &c.* Never, O never!

## XI

Where shall the traitor rest,  
He, the deceiver,  
Who could win maiden's breast,  
Ruin, and leave her?  
In the lost battle,  
Borne down by the flying,  
Where mingles war's rattle  
With groans of the dying

## CHORUS.

\* *Ellenore, &c.* There shall he be lying.  
Her wing shall the eagle flap  
O'er the false hearted,  
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,  
Ere life be parted  
Shame and dishonour sit  
By his grave ever;  
Blessing shall hallow it,—  
Never, O never!

## CHORUS

*Ellenore, &c.* Never, O never!